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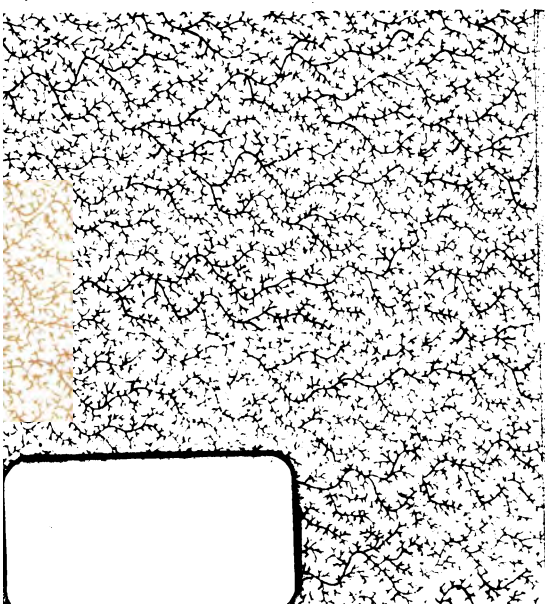

THE

MANAGEMENT

OF THE

TONGUE,

UNDER THE FOLLOWING VERY IMPORTANT AND USEFUL HEADS:—

Conversation,
Babbler,
Silent Man,
Witty Man,
Droll,
Jester,
Disputer,
Opinionater,
Heedless and inconsiderate Man,
Complimenter,
Man who praises others,
Flatterer,
Liar,
Boaster,
Ill Tongue,
Swearer,
Promiser,
Novelist,
Tale Bearer,
Adviser,
Reprover,
Instructer,
Man who trusts others,
Tongue of Women,
Language of Love,
Complainer,
Character.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

SECOND EDITION.

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1899.

Presented to the Am. Antiq. Society by J. Thomas.

Character of the Work.

[*The following* Literary Notice *of the* "MANAGEMENT OF THE TONGUE," *is from the pen of a very worthy and respectable Clergyman, who has long been acquainted with the merits of the work.*]

THE author of the little work now presented to the publick, has a merit so unobtrusive, is so modest in his pretensions, and so humble in his address, that unless introduced by some one who will undertake to speak in his behalf, like unassuming worth in real life, he would be in danger of undeserved neglect. To make him better known as a MORALIST and ADVISER, is, therefore, the design of this communication; and thus invite the friends of wisdom and virtue to give him a cordial welcome to their parlour and their closets, where they will find him *intelligent as an acquaintance, instructive as a companion, and faithful as a friend.* The subject he discusses is so highly interesting, and it is treated in a manner so ingenious, judicious, and impressive, that he who is conversant with him without being made wiser and better, or at least becoming more discreet in his conduct and more correct in his intercourse with mankind, is not likely to be benefited by any advice, or improved by any instruction.

He is a MORAL PAINTER; and his characters are drawn with the pencil of a master. They

are not all, indeed, finished and full length figures; but there are strong outlines, and striking lineaments, which prove that he had well studied the originals.

Alluding to the title and subject of his work, we may say, that it is "VOX OCULIS SUBJECTA;" and in this gallery of portraits every examiner may find one, which is a *a likeness of himself.* In the explanation of them there is sometimes a shrewdness of remark, sometimes a hint pointed with satire or polished with irony, and sometimes a force and poignancy of expression, evincive that he who made them had been intimately conversant with men and manners, had drawn up his opinions from close investigation and tried experience, and is well calculated to discharge the united office of a COUNSELLOR, a CENSOR, and a JUDGE.

Let no one from fastidiousness or prejudice slight him for having been a FRENCHMAN; but recollect that he lived in the ancient glory of his nation, and had learned to *practise* as well as to *teach*, the purest morality.

It must not, however, be denied, that his translator has put on a dress, which, so far from sitting gracefully upon him, does not fit him well, and in some places wants mending;—yet, even in this unfashionable and antiquated attire, he may appear to advantage in good company.

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3. Every body ought to be so much master of his discourse, as to bear, without any impatience, to be interrupted.

4. When any body is done speaking, be silent for a little while, to see whether he has any thing else to say.

5. No right answer can be given to a question that is not understood.

6. Confidence is a greater help to conversation than wit.

7. No man ought to make it his business to take up any body in conversation, for every wrong thing which he may let fall.

8. You must fancy, when you happen to be in any conversation that you are playing at chess; consider well the disposition of the game before you move any piece.

9. Whoever speaks always of himself, will at last give others occasion to speak ill of him.

10. It requires a great deal of prudence, circumspection, and art, to speak of a man in his presence.

11. A man free from vanity will seldom speak much.

12. Speak to be understood as well as to be heard.

13. Be sure not to make yourself so singular in conversation, as to be looked upon as an original which every body would be ashamed to be the copy of.

14. An immodest tongue is the interpreter of a corrupt heart.

15. Never ask any man a question, unless you think he can answer it.

16. It is a ridiculous thing for a man to be ashamed to ask a question, in order to instruct himself.

17. Exaggerations are as many prostitutions of one's reputation, because they lay open the shallowness of his understanding, and his ill taste.

18. Silence is the safeguard of ignorance.

THE BABBLER.

MAXIM 1.—It is very difficult, not to say impossible, to speak much, and to the purpose.
2. Whoever speaks too much, does often betray himself.
3. Great talkers are commonly very contemptible, and very much despised.
4. A great talker will always speak, though nobody minds him, nor does he mind any body when they speak to him.
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MAXIM 1.—A witty and satirical saying is enough to spoil the merit of the best work, and the reputation of the most honest man.
2. The salt of witty sayings is the seasoning of a conversation, and makes it agreeable.
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THE DROLL.

MAXIM 1.—Drolleries are good for nothing, when a man values them too much, and they are only good, when he does not pretend that they are so.
2. They who make others laugh are seldom esteemed.

THE JESTER.

MAXIM 1.—Avoid jesting, as a snare, which your mind lays to your tranquillity.
2. A profest jeerer will seldom bear a jest.
3. Every jest is an injury to some men.
4. A man given to jesting ought to have as much regard to his hearers as to those whom he jeers.
5. No man will jeer his friend, if he looks upon him as one half of himself.
6. It is as shameful a thing for a superior to jeer his inferior, as it is for a man well armed to attack a man, who, having no arms, cannot defend himself.
7. When a man jests upon religion it is a great sign he has none.

THE DISPUTER.

MAXIM 1.—The disputes of learned men about doctrines or matters of fact, will frequently turn into personal quarrels.
2. Never dispute with a design to contradict others, but to instruct yourself.
3. Never make a trifling thing the subject of a great dispute.
4. The reason why disputes do commonly last a long time, is, because the disputants are a long time without understanding one another.
5. Some men, in their disputes, measure the worth of their arguments by the number and weight of their words.
6. Silence is not always a sign of discretion in a dispute.

7. We are not commonly so much displeased with the opinions of other men, as we are with their passionate, presumptuous, haughty and obstinate manner of maintaining them.
8. A man ought to be very sure of a fact before he disputes about the manner of it, or its nature and properties.

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MAXIM 1.—An opinionater does not yield, because he is resolved never to yield.
2. The best way to deal with an opinionater, is to be silent.

THE HEEDLESS AND INCONSIDERATE MAN.

MAXIM 1.—Inconsiderateness is the cause of most faults that are committed in the commerce of the world.
2. A heedless man speaks and hears wrong.

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MAXIM 1.—Compliments are authorised by use; therefore every body ought to make only as many compliments, and such as use requires.

THE MAN WHO PRAISES OTHERS.

MAXIM 1.—Praises are extremely sweet and agreeable, when they are judicious.
2. It is a ridiculous thing to praise a man for such things as are not properly his own.
3. They, who do not deserve to be praised, are often sparing of their praises.
4. They, who praise men only to please them, betray their judgment by too much complaisance.
5. Men are very willing to hear the praises that are bestowed upon them; but they are very unwilling to hear the praises which a man bestows upon himself.
6. Praises are often a mere interested commerce.
7. It is likely that a man is sincere in his praises, if he dares blame you, when he thinks you are to blame.
8. Seek not to be praised, but think only of deserving it.

9. It is a kind of injury done to a man, not to praise him dexterously.
10. It requires a great skill to find out a just medium to our praises.
11. We must have as much regard to those who hear our praises, as to those upon whom we bestow them.
12. A man, who is extremely fond of praises, would have nobody but himself to be praised.

THE FLATTERER.

MAXIM 1.—We are our first flatterers.
2. Flatterers, who praise great men for an imaginary merit, lull them asleep in real miseries.
3. Men will often cover and flatter the defects of others to hide their own.
4. No man ought to avoid the character of a flatterer so as to become a brutish man.

THE LIAR.

MAXIM 1.—A liar is hated by God and despised by men.
2. A liar is not to be trusted.

THE BOASTER.

MAXIM 1.—They who have the least courage, are often the boldest in their words.
2. He that boasts of a good thing he has done, gives occasion to believe that he did it only to boast of it.
3. The words of those who boast themselves, to appear considerable men, are seldom attended with any action.
4. The boasting man is commonly a deciding man.

THE ILL TONGUE.

MAXIM 1.—Ill tongues are so common, that no man can flatter himself to be secure from their disputes.
2. If a detracting man does no harm to those whom he speaks ill of, it is only for want of an occasion.
3. A detracting man, who knows that he gives occasion to speak ill of him, thinks to justify himself by speaking ill of others.

THE SWEARER.

MAXIM 1.—You ought to rely more upon the virtue and probity of a man, than upon his oaths.
2. Use no oaths; but keep your word without swearing.

THE PROMISER.

MAXIM 1.—Never promise any thing without these two provisos, *if I can, if it be not against my duty.*
2. He, who is always ready to promise, will not be so ready to perform what he has promised.
3. Men do often promise according to their hopes, and keep their promises according to their fear.
4. A man gets more by promising than performing what he has promised.

THE NOVELIST.

MAXIM 1.—When a profest novelist speaks the truth, it is a mere chance.
2. Though a novelist is no farther concerned in great events than to relate them, yet he thinks himself concerned in the execution of them.
3. The profest novelist is equally pleased with good and ill news.
4. Whilst a novelist regulates in his fancy the affairs of the state, he commonly orders his own very ill.

THE TALE BEARER.

MAXIM 1.—A tale bearer is often a babbler, or a malicious man.
2. Do not give free access to a tale bearer.
3. You ought to be less inclined to believe a report than to hear it.

THE ADVISER.

MAXIM 1.—The best advice is that which is given seasonably.
2. The advice which seems to be given with the greatest sincerity, and is consequently the most acceptable, is that which a man seems to give without any self-interest.
3. A man ought to be wise, or, if he is not, he ought to be advised by those that are so.

THE REPROVER.

MAXIM 1.—We ought to reprimand weak men with condescension, tractable men with simplicity, refractory men with authority, and all of them with prudence and circumspection.
2. They who deserve most to be praised, will bear a reprimand with more patience.

THE INSTRUCTER.

MAXIM 1.—You ought to be well instructed before you instruct others.
2. In order to dispose men to receive instruction, we must win their affection before we require of them that they should perform their duty.
3. When you instruct others, be always so much master of yourself as to give no hold to impatience.
4. Whilst you imprint the knowledge of justice in the minds of those whom you instruct, take care to form in them the habit of that virtue.
5. The best instructions are those which are grounded upon the solid principles of religion.

THE MAN WHO TRUSTS OTHERS, OR IS TRUSTED WITH A SECRET.

MAXIM 1. What we have been trusted with by others, does not belong to us; it is a sacred thing which we ought never to make use of.
2. Whoever imparts an important secret to another man, makes himself voluntarily his slave.

THE TONGUE OF WOMEN.

MAXIM 1.—Women would not be so much despised by men, if they did not say so many things that deserve to be despised.
2. There is no secret which a woman will keep better than that of her age.
3. When women are immodest in their words, they give occasion to believe that they are immodest in their lives.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE.

MAXIM 1.—When a woman does often hear a man say, that he loves her, she will love him at last.
2. Though the love we express for others seems to be never so much uninterested, yet it has always some relation to self love.
3. As we do not appear always lovely, so we must not expect to be always loved.
4. An angry lover is extremely desirous to allay his anger.

THE COMPLAINING MAN.

MAXIM 1.—We are at last unwilling to pity those who are always complaining.
2. The complaints of men do not so much proceed from their great sufferings, as from too great a niceness.

THE COMFORTER.

MAXIM 1.—He, who thinks more of speaking fine words, than of giving good reasons is a wretched comforter.
2. He who knows not how to comfort himself, will not be able to comfort others.
To comfort one's self in adversity.
To keep one's self from melancholy.
To keep one's self from being vexed at the contempt, injurious words and evil speaking of other men.
To comfort one's self in a mean and low condition.
To comfort one's self in a state of dependence and servitude.
For the comfort of those of a low extraction.
For the comfort of those who are sick and full of pain.
For the comfort of those, who lose their estates, their friends and relations.
For the comfort of those who are obliged to work.
Upon fear.
For the comfort of those who are in poverty.
Upon the fear of death.

INTRODUCTION.

I.—SHOULD I say, that I wrote this book at the solicitation of my friends, and that I was moved to get it printed by their repeated entreaties, I should impose upon the publick; seeing I have communicated my design to nobody; I shall not therefore justify myself at the cost of others, if the publick does not receive this work so kindly, as it is natural for an author to wish.

II.—The only thing I aim at by publishing this book, is to be in some manner useful to those who shall read it, by imparting to them the continual reflections, which I began to make use of some years ago, and which I use still for the government of my tongue: Because I have always observed, that there is nothing more dangerous, than not to know how to govern it, and that it does very much contribute to make us happy, or unhappy. Our faults do commonly proceed from our wrong judgments; our wrong judgments from false impressions; and false impressions from the commerce we have one with another, by the help of language. The tongue is, as it were, the helm of our conduct; though it be very small, yet it is the most important part of the vessel, because it turns as it pleases. If we consider it well, we shall find, that *speaking* is partly the cause of the good or evil that happens to us; we are very

often loved or hated, esteemed or despised, and neglected or feared, on account of our words. By this means we may be very much elevated, or precipitated into a low and mean state; by this means we may grow rich, or fall into poverty; by this means we may be very acceptable to others, or rejected by them with indignation. Lastly, men do commonly judge of our merit by our words; let nobody think, therefore, that I have been moved to publish this book out of self-conceit, or out of a vain desire of being spoken of; I only design to let others know the method I follow, in order to speak; if they do not like it, they are not obliged to follow it. I publish what I think, without pretending that others should think precisely as I do; I publish my thoughts, my reflections, my conjectures; which can be no decisions for any body but those who shall think, reflect, and conjecture as I do. I do not pretend so much to instruct others, as to give an account of my own instructions, which I have endeavoured to practise. If they are approved by my readers, they ought to make a good use of them as well as I. No man has a privilege, whereby he may be dispensed from following truth, justice and reason, whoever shews them to him.

III.—The definitions of vices and virtues are well known; every body knows what is good and evil; the world is full of books, which teach us how to think, how to speak and how to behave ourselves; we see every where some characters and pictures of manners, some rules for a civil

life, some instructions, advices and maxims, concerning the duties of men in their several stations; but are they practised? Do we find any author who makes it his business to practise his own advices and rules, that he may prove the facility or possibility thereof by his own example? There is nothing more easy than to speak; and therefore we see many great and fine *speakers;* there is nothing more difficult than to do, and therefore we see very few *doers.* Nobody ought therefore to take it ill, if, whilst I shew how a man must govern his tongue, I tell with so much sincerity what I do to govern my own. I do not pretend that my readers ought to believe that I do exactly practise the rules, which have been given me by word of mouth, or which I have read in books, or found out by my own meditations. I only design to tell them what I have done to make a good use of all those instructions. I confess, to my own shame, that I am far from being so perfect, as I intended to be; I do ingenuously acknowledge it; and such an acknowledgment is so much the more advantageous to me, because it excites me to make a new progress in the practice of the instructions contained in this book.

IV.—I speak often of *myself* in this work, not that I believe that the publick will be desirous to know me, or that I desire to be known to the publick; on the contrary, I wish with all my heart, that I may hide myself; but only to impart to others the reflections and practises, which I made use of, and which I use still every day for the con-

duct of my life, as the most proper means to speak with discretion, and to be silent with prudence. If any body complains that I speak too much of *myself*, I complain on the other hand, that men do not speak enough of *themselves*. I should be more moved with the discourses of an author who should tell me, *I use such and such means, to avoid such a fault, and to acquire such a perfection*, than when he tells me, *do this, do that*, without shewing me by his own experience, that it is an easy thing to practise what he advises me to. I protest, therefore, that I do not speak of myself out of any presumption; I am far from having such perfections as might afford me such a pretence. Lastly, if any body is offended at me for it, if it be said, that I do not practise what I pretend to practise; well, without losing any time in examining whether I deserve to be censured or not, let my readers examine only, whether what I say be practicable, and ought to be practised. For my part, when I hear any body say, *there is an author, who gives very fine instructions, but does not practise them;* well, say I, let us practice them for him, it was the thing he aimed at when he published them. Such wrangling does not become a man who does sincerely desire to make himself perfect.

V.—I writ this book, and this book improves me every day. The more I reflect upon what it contains, the more I polish and perfect myself. Perhaps such an advantage is an effect of self love, because I may be prepossessed in favour of my

work; however it be, I am the better for it. Can any body make a better use of self love? Nevertheless, I find myself so imperfect still, that I should be very willing to hide myself, if I could. The perfection I have acquired, does rather deserve the name of an imperfection, which lessens every day, than that of perfection.

VI.—The reader will not find here any metaphysical abstractions, any advices more spiritual than practicable, nor any ideas of a perfection so sublime, that men do commonly despair to attain to them. This book contains nothing but familiar truths, and such practices as are not above the reach of those who will make a trial of them.

VII.—After all, if nobody reads my book, I shall not be troubled for it, by reason of my good intention, and of the advantage which I reap every day from it. I shall accuse nobody of injustice; I shall only say, that I was mistaken, when I thought that my book would be of some use; I am certainly more willing to trust the judgment of the publick, than my own; a man is commonly no good judge in his own cause.

VIII.—If some nice men do not find in this work, all the politeness, and all the scrupulous expressions which they would have, I shall be contented, provided they understand me; (which will be no difficult thing) provided they grant that what I say is good, and deserves to be practised by them; I desire no more, and I think this is all they can wish for. What! Would they condemn a good moral maxim for a small gram

matical fault? Let nobody therefore look here for a polite, but only for a judicious language. I have not neglected the first, but I made my chief business of the second.

IX.—The reader will, perhaps, observe here some thoughts which he may have observed somewhere else; I have read no other books within these few years, but such as might serve me to regulate my conduct; and therefore I make no doubt, but that there are several thoughts of other men in this work besides those which I have quoted. I do willingly restore them to those whom they belong to, and I should be glad to name the owners of them, if I could remember their names; but I have so much handled and meditated upon them, for my own use, that I have forgot from whence I had them, and I fancy that they are my own; and therefore let those, who are more willing to criticise books than to be the better for them, take care, lest, while they censure me, they should censure those who have better parts than I have. *Montaigne* expresses himself agreeably upon this subject. *I conceal the name of the author, on purpose to refrain the rashness of those hasty men who fall foul upon all sorts of books. I am willing that they should give a fillip to* Plutarch *upon my nose, and that they should scald themselves in abusing* Seneca, *thinking to abuse me.*

MANAGEMENT OF THE TONGUE.

Of Conversation.

MAXIM I.

Conversation improves learning, and makes it agreeable.

REFLECTION.

NOTHING can be more tedious than a learned man confined to his study, who, being a perfect stranger to the world, happens to be in company of men equally learned and polite. Either he says nothing, or, if he speaks, he does it in such a dry, rustical, wild and perplexed manner, that every body is as uneasy at it as himself. A man must have no commerce with the world, or, if he pretends to it, he ought to know how to contribute to the pleasure of those with whom he converses. You may, if you please, instruct yourself in your closet, in the most abstracted metaphysical truths; but do not discourse of them in all companies, nor imagine they will be attended to with the same satisfaction you had in learning of them. If you are resolved to discourse of

them, do it with so much clearness, that they may not require more attention than can be given at such a time, when men, who are then very jealous of their liberty, are extremely afraid of a long chain of arguments, and of every thing that will make them uneasy: If I am tedious when I speak, though I speak never so well, it will be to no purpose: The tediousness of my discourse will render every thing that I shall say unpleasant. Whoever will live in society must make himself sociable; and the only way to learn to be sociable, is to be often in society. Conversation is the great book of the world, which teaches the use of other books; learning is unbred without it, and loses all its charms; study improves the talents of nature, but conversation brings them to practice, and gives them a further finishing. The most learned carry their knowledge to a great perfection by such a commerce, because it gives them occasion to discover and resolve many difficulties, which they would never have thought of in their closets. I have often perceived in conversation, that I was ignorant of several things which I fancied I had learned well in my private studies; wherefore I am never so sure of the truth of what I have learned alone, as when I have polished it under the critical correction of men more learned than myself; so true it is, that the company of men of parts is a school wherein one may learn with pleasure what they learned with labour.

MAXIM II.

The more you give to other men occasion to please in conversation, the more you please them.

REFLECTION.—WE give others occasion to please, when we give them occasion to shew their good talents. Do not explain things too much to a man of parts; let him guess a little; such a conduct will shew your good opinion of him, and nothing can more flatter his self love. We may be esteemed by shewing a great deal of wit and learning in conversation, but at the same time we may be very unacceptable; they who hear us are not commonly willing to see themselves surpassed; as for me, I am contented to shew that I am not altogether ignorant, when I happen to be with those that cannot bear in the least the tone of a master: I rather endeavour to persuade myself, that those with whom I converse, are so many masters able to instruct me: With such a persuasion, it is a greater pleasure to me to hear than to speak. When any body tells me a history, though it be known to me with all its circumstances, yet it gives me more satisfaction than I should have, if I did interrupt the person that relates it, to let him know that I am not ignorant of it: I should make him uneasy by interrupting him; whereas, if I let him speak, he enjoys the pleasure of fancying that he teaches me something that I know not; I am well contented, because I am sure that,

he will be better pleased with me, than if I seemed to be better instructed. To conclude, I am far from affecting to surpass any body; on the contrary, in order to be such as I ought to be, with respect to others, I put them, as much as I can, in a way of appearing such as they desire to appear. By such an obliging behaviour, we find that we never come out of a conversation better pleased, than when we can flatter ourselves that others are pleased with us.

MAXIM III.

Every body ought to be so much master of his discourse as to bear, without any impatience, to be interrupted.

REFLECTION.—WHEN we speak to others, we ought chiefly to do it, in order to divert, or instruct them: this being so, why should we be angry when they interrupt us, since we ought to believe that they do it only to make their joy or their instruction more complete? Perhaps we shall be interrupted unseasonably; well, shall we be the worse for it? They that are witnesses of such an unseasonable interruption, will do us justice; our patience will no less deserve their esteem, than the most excellent things we could say. No man ought to be a slave to his discourse; he ought, if I may say so, to hold it al-

ways in his hands, that he may handle it according to the several occurrences and incidents of conversation: I confess it is no easy thing; yet it may be done if vanity does not hinder it.

MAXIM IV.

When any body has done speaking, be silent for a little while, to see whether he has any thing else to say.

REFLECTION.—WE see every day some men extremely eager to speak next to others; they will be sure not to let the conversation die: Such a one spoke last who would say something better still, if he was allowed to take breath that he might continue his discourse. The reason why most conversations are so imperfect, is the eagerness which every body expresses to act his part in them, before the part of others be entirely acted. "I have often observed this fault in that school of "the commerce of the world, that instead of ta-"king notice of others, we make it our business to "have others take notice of us, and we are more "careful to put off our wares than to get new "ones." In order to avoid such a troublesome fault, I willingly give every body time to speak, without any itching desire of speaking next to him, being persuaded that if I was eager to succeed him in his discourse, I should never speak right of the subject he was upon; because, having not given him time to express his thoughts, I

should not know all that is necessary for me to know, and be entirely possest with the desire of speaking, I should not have been attentive enough to what he said. It is most certain, that they who are eager to come into the lists, do not at all mind the last words of those who speak before them; they are only for speaking, and not for hearing. One of the reasons why there are so few reasonable men to be seen in conversation, is, that most men think rather of what they are going to say, than of answering precisely what has been said to them.

MAXIM V.

No right answer can be given to a question that is not understood.

REFLECTION.—WANT of attention is commonly the cause of the oddness, obscurity, and disorder of most conversations; because most men do little mind what they hear, and yet they answer with as much assurance, as if they had not lost a word of what has been said; thus a conversation dwindles into a continual gallimaufry for want of understanding one another. I have so often observed the ridiculousness of those, who, out of inadvertency, ask unseasonable questions, and return unseasonable answers, that I take a special care to avoid such rambling; I hear what others say with great attention, both to instruct myself,

and that I may not be troublesome to them. I also take care, in order to avoid another fault that is very common, not to speak for another, whose business it is to answer; because I will not persuade him and those who hear me, that I suspect him of incapacity, nor give them occasion to suspect me of presumption. To conclude, I endeavour in all my answers, not to use many needless words, remembering *Plutarch's* advice, who says, *that the centre of the circumference of an answer, ought to be only that which the querist desires to know.* It is true, that nothing that is studied ought to be said in conversation; but it is true likewise, that nothing ought to be said in it rashly and by chance.

MAXIM VI.

Confidence is a greater help to conversation than wit.

REFLECTION.—THEY who confide in one another, speak with freedom; they are not constrained; they do mutually open their hearts, and declare their mind; nothing can stop the course of their free conversations, so that they continue as much as they can that sweet and agreeable commerce. But when men design to shew a great deal of wit, the attention that is required for it, occasions a dryness which soon puts an end to the conversation; hence it is that the freest conversations are the most amusing, because

they may be more easily kept up. On the contrary, a studied conversation is neither acceptable to those who hear it, nor for the reputation of those that speak. I had rather read a book; I can leave it at any time, without any inconveniency, when I am weary of it.

MAXIM VII.

No man ought to make it his business to take up any body in conversation for every wrong thing which he may let fall.

REFLECTION.—THOUGH I be never so attentive in conversation, I do not examine with rigour all that is said in it; conversation is a free commerce, wherein a great many little things must be past by without inquiring into them. As they are often spoken without any design, so they ought to be heard without any critical reflections.

MAXIM VIII.

You must fancy, when you happen to be in any conversation, that you are playing at chess; consider well the disposition of the game, before you move any piece.

REFLECTION.—DO not jest in a company where you see some afflicted persons; do not set up for a perpetual moralist amongst young peo-

ple, who are altogether bent upon mirth, cheerfulness and pleasures. Do not affect to spoil the sport of any company, with such a way and such discourses, as are more proper to frighten than to please. Do not inveigh against poetry in the presence of those who pretend to make good verses. I had rather speak, in conversation, of things which I am sure will be willingly heard, than of what I should be glad to say. Whoever brings in an unpleasant subject, runs the hazard of making himself as unacceptable as the subject itself. I am not very willing to speak of learning before an illiterate man, because I do not desire to get any honour by my learning, at the cost of another man's ignorance.

MAXIM IX.

Whoever speaks always of himself, will at last give others occasion to speak ill of him.

REFLECTION.—HE that will be always the subject of the conversation, gives occasion to think that he loves and esteems nobody but himself; which is enough to lose the love and esteem of every body. What an impertinent part do those men act in conversation, who, whilst they are full of themselves, would have others to mind nothing but them! If I made no great noise in conversation, I may say that I have not been very troublesome in it. I do not love to speak of my-

self in any company; for if I say any thing to my praise, I shall make myself so ridiculous, that the best things I could say, would not be able to make amends for it; if I say any thing to my disadvantage, people will be apt to look upon it as an artifice to engage others to contradict me; besides, why should I speak ill of myself? The commerce of the world has taught me, that there are many other men who will be ready to do that for me. What therefore could I say of myself, seeing I will neither praise nor blame myself?

MAXIM X.

It requires a great deal of prudence, circumspection and art, to speak of a man in his presence.

REFLECTION.—THIS is the reason why I often speak of those that are present under the names of those who are dead or absent; with such a precaution, I praise them, without seeming to be willing to flatter them; or I censure them without doing them any wrong; or I give them advice without shocking their pride.

MAXIM XI.

A man free from vanity will seldom speak much.

REFLECTION.—I THINK we do no injustice to those who speak much, when we suspect them

of pride and vanity; for, why do they speak so much? Is it not because they fancy that what they say is worth hearing? As for me, I esteem myself so little, that I never look upon myself as a necessary actor in conversation. I do very willingly permit all those who shall think that I speak too much, not to mind what I say, to fall asleep in my presence, and even to avoid me, as a dangerous man, and a disturber of the civil society. They will use me, as I wish I could use others on the like occasion, and by that means I shall endeavour to mend myself, and to grow more discreet and wise. When a man speaks much, he must have so much wit, to shew it at all times, that I find it better for me to be silent. I love a conversation, wherein I not am obliged to shew more wit than I have.

MAXIM XII.

Speak to be understood as well as to be heard.

REFLECTION.—THE clearness of a man's discourse, shews the clearness of his conception; both make conversation agreeable, because what is said in it is intelligible; I had rather be silent, than speak without expressing myself clearly. We must have a special regard to others, when we speak, for every body speaks to be understood; he, who expresses himself obscurely and confusedly, is troublesome to his hearers, because they must take some pains to apprehend what he

says; but in truth they are seldom at such pains; for they do commonly hear such men, as it were with their eyes looking upon them, whilst their ears and their minds are attentive to the least object, that will cause any distraction. When I consider that men ought to speak intelligibly, I should think that the terms of art, which are not in common use, may very well be laid aside in some familiar conversations; I had rather a physician should say, *to let blood*, than *to phlebotomize*. To which I add, that for the same reason that a man ought to make himself intelligible in his discourse, they, who never speak coherently, and run from one subject to another without ending any one of them, are insupportable in their conversation.

MAXIM XIII.

Be sure not to make yourself so singular in conversation, as to be looked upon as an original, which every body would be ashamed to be the copy of.

REFLECTION.—THERE are but too many such originals to be seen in conversation. I shall mention some whom I have often observed, and who, by the singularity of their manners, were looked upon as a sort of comical men, fitter to make one laugh than to be imitated. The first that come into my mind, are those who affect to use new words at every turn, which they have taken up as a jewel, wherewith they pretend to

adorn their discourse; though those words be never so new, they are so worn out by their frequent repetitions of them, that the oldest and the most obsolete words would certainly be heard with greater pleasure.

There is another sort of originals, I mean those, who, coming too near the person whom they speak to, seem to take his nose for his ears, so that they splash his face all over with their spittle; if you retire, they come forward, and at last they drive you into a corner, where you can no longer avoid the excrements of their mouths.

When a man laughs first (and very often alone) after he has spoken, it is a sign of a very ridiculous original. Such an applause, which he gives himself, is very near akin to what we call silliness. There are also some laughing men, who laugh when there is no reason for it, only to shew their fine teeth; the saddest and most pitiful objects will make their mouths laugh, though they raise tears in their eyes.

Another sort of men not to be imitated, are those, who, not vouchsafing to shew any attention to what is said, think, or seem to think by themselves of any thing else besides what is the subject of the conversation. When a man is thoughtful in company, he gives just ground, by such an absence of mind, to believe that he does not much care for those that are with him; I think so too; and besides, I believe the company would be glad to be rid of such raving thoughtful men. We shall see in the sequel of this work, many

other men of a character as odious as those whom I have mentioned.

MAXIM XIV.

An immodest tongue is the interpreter of a corrupt heart.

REFLECTION.—I CANNOT hear a lewd discourse, or any immodest equivocations, and loose words, without being full of indignation against those who speak them. I shall never think myself guilty of a rash judgment, if I doubt of the purity of a man's life, when he is not ashamed to take such a liberty; a pure life cannot bear any impurity. Words are the images of thoughts; an expression in this case is much the same with an action. It is very difficult for those, who are present at such conversations, where some men make bold to say any thing, without any regard to modesty; it is, I say, very difficult for them to preserve their virtue; because the sensual thoughts that are raised in their minds will excite them to afford to their senses, all the pleasures which have been represented to their imagination.

MAXIM XV.

Never ask any man a question, unless you think he can answer it.

REFLECTION.—I DO commonly observe this rule in all my questions, not to ask any thing but what I think a man does perfectly know; with

such a precaution I instruct myself, and I please those who instruct me. The reputation of other men ought not to be exposed without reason; every body is tender of it, because it is a thing, the loss whereof is most sensible, and almost irreparable.

MAXIM XVI.

It is a ridiculous thing for a man to be ashamed to ask a question in order to instruct himself.

REFLECTION.—No man ought to be ashamed to let others know that he is not so presuming as to think that he knows what he is ignorant of; no man ought to be ashamed, because he is willing to get out of his ignorance. Whoever pretends to a greater capacity than he really has, will never have any.

MAXIM XVII.

Exaggerations are as many prostitutions of one's reputation, because they lay open the shallowness of his understanding, and his ill taste.

REFLECTION.—IF a child never saw but one man of a common size, he would take him for a giant, comparing him with himself. Thus it is with some shallow wits, who, because the most common objects appear to them extraordinary, never mention them without some exaggerations.

If the shallowness of their understanding is not the cause of their hyperbolical expressions, they must at least expect to be accounted liars, or imprudent men. It is the part of a wise man, never to use a *superlative;* for such a way of speaking is always repugnant to truth or prudence; the effect of these strained expressions prove most times contrary to the intention of those who use them; for, the fear they have not to say enough to persuade others, makes them say too much to be believed. Wise men look upon exaggerations as prodigies, wonders, and all other extraordinary things; they do not easily believe them; being not commonly very credulous, they only give their assent to evident and undeniable truths; but extraordinary things may be very often doubted of.

MAXIM XVIII.

Silence is the safeguard of ignorance.

REFLECTION.—WHEN I do not know well a thing that is in debate in conversation, my first rule in such a case is to be silent; though vanity prompts me never so much to speak, I hold my tongue. Silence is of great use on such an occasion to an ignorant man; for he will be rather praised for his discretion, than suspected of ignorance.

The Babbler.

MAXIM I.

'Tis very difficult, not to say impossible, to speak much, and to the purpose.

REFLECTION.—EVERY great talker wants judgment, but judgment is necessary to speak to the purpose; in effect, how can a man without judgment, know when, how, and why he must speak? how can a great talker, whilst he is hurried by the impetuosity of his tongue, take time to use all those precautions? The only attention he is capable of, is to spare as much time as he can, to launch into discourse; which he cannot forbear doing without an extreme violence to himself; if so be that he speaks, he does not care whether it be to the purpose or not; speaking is the only thing he aims at; it is his madness, or rather his folly.

MAXIM II.

Whoever speaks too much, does often betray himself.

REFLECTION.—IT is the common fate of great talkers, not to be able to conceal even their most secret affairs; whatever precaution they may use, it is very difficult for them, in such a profusion of words, not to let fall some, that will discover what

it is their interest to keep secret, especially when they speak to men that are cunning enough to lay a snare to their prattling, in order to surprise them. Seeing therefore a great talker will betray his own secrets, I shall be sure not to trust him with mine; one cannot be too cautious with such men. Their indiscretion hinders me from setting any value upon the confidence they repose in me, because I suspect they do it rather to speak, than out of a sincere confidence in me. "I tell you "this as a secret, (says a babbler to me, whispering "in my ears as close as ever he can) pray let "nobody know it;" and then he goes and says as much, and with as low voice, to every body he meets in his way. I shall certainly be very faithful to him; for whom could I tell his secret to, that does not know it already of him?

MAXIM III.

Great talkers are commonly very contemptible, and very much despised.

REFLECTION.—GREAT talkers are very contemptible, because their great talk proceeds from a shallowness of mind, heedlessness, indiscretion or weakness. Their weakness appears by their being unable to stop the current of their words; their heedlessness, by their continual want of attention to observe the rules of *decorum* in conversation; their indiscretion, by their having no regard to those they converse with; the shallowness of

their wit, by the small extent of their knowledge, which does not permit them to penetrate into the inside of those who hear them, that they may know when it is a proper time to speak, or to be silent. They are therefore very much despised upon all those accounts. Nobody vouchsafes to hear what they say; they are thought unworthy of any attention. Whilst they speak, the souls of those who seem to hear them, retire within themselves, and think of any thing else besides what they say. They can find nobody that will hear them speak, but besides, they cannot so much as find any one that will believe what they say; so great is the contempt they lie under, that truth itself is despised, when it comes out of their mouths; men are always apt to believe, that a babbler is a liar, because they are persuaded, that being so greedy of speaking, he had rather tell lies than hold his tongue, when he has no truths to tell.

MAXIM IV.

A great talker will always speak, though nobody minds him, nor does he mind any body when they speak to him.

REFLECTION.—ONE would think that the ears of great talkers are changed into tongues; hence it is that they are almost incorrigible; in effect, the only way to reform them, is by speaking to them, in order to instruct them; but they are so far from being disposed to hear others, that they

will never give over speaking. Whilst a babbler tires those who hear him, and raises their indignation against him; whilst they oppose what he says, I am contented to recollect myself, that I may strengthen the natural aversion I have for his great talk. My reflections work more upon me, than their remonstrances upon him.

MAXIM V.

Great talkers are as much feared as they are despised.

REFLECTION.—EVERY body shuns their company; every body thinks of retiring as soon as they appear; every body keeps silence for fear of giving them occasion to speak; but they do not observe, that if those great talkers speak, even when they hear others speak, they will not be silent if they hear nobody speak. I have often observed, that as soon as a great talker begins to open his mouth, they who are not obliged out of decency to keep him company, retire as hastily as if they were threatened with a violent storm; as seamen use to shelter themselves to avoid a tempest, which they think themselves threatened with by the rattling of a dangerous wind; yet great talkers do not perceive how uneasy they are to others, so great is the fury of speaking they are possessed with; a fury which shews itself further by their eagerness of telling ill news to those whose interest it is to know nothing of them; nay,

every body is afraid to eat at their table, though it be never so good, because they rise from it with the head ache, which is not so much caused by their wine, as by the continual noise of their tongues; to which you may add the precautions that must be used against the several motions of their hands, which they make use of to extort an attention which nobody grants but against his will. If a babbler happens to be by a sick man, how uneasy will he be to a person who desires nothing but rest and silence! Hence it is, that several people had rather be in the company of a wicked man, who is discreet and sparing of his words, than of a good man who is a babbler.

MAXIM VI.

Great talkers spoil their best actions by speaking too much of them.

REFLECTION.—NOBODY values the good things they have done, when they speak too much of them; for every body suspects at last, that if they have done a good action, it was to have matter for talking; and their talk being very troublesome, it is no wonder if the action, that is the cause of it, is not at all esteemed. Thus a great talker will spoil the best things he can do. Indeed, a man must be a great enemy to himself and others, to do himself so much wrong, and be troublesome to every body besides.

MAXIM VII.

Great talkers are commonly too curious.

REFLECTION.—BEING desirous to speak a great deal wherever they go, they must needs look for matter; in order to find it, they go up and down prying into the secrets of families, to make them public afterwards. A babbler speaks first of others, and then of himself, when others afford him no matter for talking; and at last, when the matter is exhausted, he invents something of his own, for fear of being silent. One may easily conclude from such a conduct, that babblers are extremely curious and inquisitive, and that they never fail to amplify what they have been told.

MAXIM VIII.

A babbler is so busy with talking that he forgets to act.

REFLECTION.—OBSERVE a great talker in company; he has much ado to leave it, because he cannot give over speaking; his footman, his valet de chambre, his clerk, his steward, his cash-keeper, come one after another, to represent to him the necessity of putting an end to his discourse, to go about his most important affairs; nobody can stop his mouth; and if he goes away, it is only when he perceives that those, whom he has tired with his long talk, are disposed to leave him;

which he does seldom perceive, for whilst any body seems to hearken to him, he fancies they are very willing he should go on, which he is sure to do. At last, he comes home, and never falls in earnest to his business, but when there is nobody he can speak to. His tongue is his helm, his *primum mobile*, his chief spring; one would fancy that he neither thinks, nor acts, nor walks, but in order to speak, and that if he was not allowed to speak, he would neither walk, nor think, nor act, if it were possible.

MAXIM IX.

They who think little, speak a great deal.

REFLECTION.—IF men would use themselves to think, they would certainly mend their faults, in a great measure; for thinking enables us to know better every thing thing that is amiss, to discover the principles thereof, to see its consequences, to apprehend the dangers that may attend it, and to find out the way of avoiding them. If a babbler would take time to think, he would discover the principle and cause of his great talk, that is, an inordinate love of himself, or an intolerable presumption. For if he was not so self-conceited, or if he did not fancy that it is impossible for him to be unacceptable to any body, he would not certainly speak so much. If a babbler would think, he would see the consequences of his

great talk, I mean, the trouble he gives to others, the time he loses, the contempt which he lies under, and the many jests that are made of him. If a babbler would think, he would apprehend the dangers into which he runs himself by his indiscretion with respect to his own affairs, and by his unfaithfulness with respect to the concerns of other men which he has been trusted with. If a babbler would think, he would learn how to avoid those dangers, those railleries, and that contempt; and in order to it, he would never speak when there is no reason for it; he would not be overhasty in answering the questions that are asked him; he would be less eager still to answer for another; he would now and then forbear making such discourses as are most pleasing to him, to avoid giving frequent occasions of bestowing praises upon him, which might fill him with joy, lest joy, which is commonly talkative, should make him so too: he would likewise shun the occasions which might prompt him to speak much; he would converse as much as ever he could with men whose authority would inspire into him silence and modesty; he would always ask himself these questions before he speaks: *Shall I receive no prejudice by what I have a mind to say? Will it be useful or acceptable to those who shall hear it?* To conclude, the more he will think, the better he will know what he ought to do; and the more he acts according to that knowledge, the less danger he will run.

The Silent Man.

MAXIM I.

They who speak little, do not want many precepts.

REFLECTION.—IF we consider that most laws and precepts are given us for the regulation of our conduct in the commerce of the world, and that words are often the cause of a disorderly conduct, it will be found that the less we speak, the less we stand in need of those laws and precepts. Silence enables us to be attentive to our duty, and to perform it; whereas the distraction which arises from too many words, does very much contribute to make us forget it. They who resolve to keep silence, when there is a just occasion for it, impose a judicious law to themselves. There are some obligations so natural and so agreeable to reason, that they may be easily known by those who had rather think than speak.

MAXIM II.

A man ought to speak to himself before he speaks to others.

REFLECTION.—WHEN we speak to others without a previous silence to think of what we are to say to them, we run a great hazard of repenting of it. How often does it happen, that when a

conversation is over, we chide ourselves for the faults we have committed therein, for want of thinking? Then a man finds that he has a great deal more wit than he shewed when he spoke; because after he has spoken to others without any previous attention, he speaks to himself, having his mind taken up with the reflections which he should have made. In the mean time, he leaves behind him an ill opinion of him, which will last a long time; for though words pass away very fast, yet they make such impressions as cannot be easily defaced, because most men, being extremely jealous of their merit, are glad to find some faults in those, who might with some pretence of reason contend with them for it. I find it certainly better for me to speak much to myself, than to speak much to others. If I speak much to others, I shall at most give some marks of capacity, though perhaps I have none; but if I speak to myself for my instruction, I shall acquire the capacity which great talkers are desirous to shew, and which they seldom have; for great talkers are not commonly men of great parts.

MAXIM III.

A word spoken unseasonably, may be of a most dangerous consequence.

REFLECTION.—SILENCE is therefore of great use to any man, because he takes time to say no-

thing but what is proper to be said. I make sometimes this remonstrance to myself: "If I "should say such a thing to any one, I should "certainly bring myself into great trouble; nev- "ertheless, I might easily let it fall, should I speak "without any attention, for a dangerous word may "be easily spoken, and such a word would be "enough to undo me. It is therefore a thing of "great consequence to me, to think well of what "I am going to say."

MAXIM IV.

Though a man speaks little, yet he may make a great figure in conversation.

REFLECTION.—A LEARNED man, who speaks little, will be accounted more learned than he really is; because, being learned, and speaking little, and the little he says being worth hearing, they who hear him will be apt to think that he is able to say better things still. Such a silence is respected by them, in proportion to the esteem they have for him. For the same reason, when a man who is accounted a great politician speaks little, he is respected by his inferiors as a mysterious man; he is admired by his superiors as a man of a consummated prudence; he is looked upon by his master as a man who can be trusted with the most important secrets, without any danger; he is esteemed by his friends as a man of a

wonderful discretion; lastly, he is feared by his enemies, because they fancy he is like the sun, which hides itself whilst it is gathering the clouds; I mean that his silence shews that he is contriving some design to destroy them, which is so much the more dangerous, because it does not appear. It must be confessed, that very often the less we speak, the greater reputation we acquire. A man, who speaks little, but to the purpose, may be esteemed with an indifferent merit. Silence is a kind of an ornament to speech itself, as shadows to colours in painting, and pauses to a concert of music.

MAXIM V.

Words ought to be like gold, which is of great value, though of a small bulk.

REFLECTION.—IDLE and needless words are proper to trifling men; a solid man has always in view the essential part of a thing, and says nothing that is superfluous; he values nothing but what is true and good, nothing else can move him, and therefore he will not lose his time about any vain and contemptible subject, as great talkers use to do; because he does not love speaking, he speaks as rarely as he can; and when he is obliged to it, he says more things than words; his forehead, his eyes, his face supply the scarcity of his words; there is nothing in him that speaks so little as his tongue; his domestics read upon his forehead

part of what he requires of them; his speaking little does very much contribute to make him well obeyed; one would think that his servants look upon the few words he speaks, as so many oracles, which they hear with great respect, and obey with great diligence.

MAXIM VI.

The plainest man, if he knows how to be silent, may deceive the most cunning man.

REFLECTION.—CUNNING and artificial men do not commonly mistrust those in whom they perceive simplicity, and therefore they do not think themselves obliged to stand upon their guard; but when a plain man knows how to be silent, his attentive silence may afford him the means of surprising the most artificial men, if he has a mind to do it. A silent simplicity is sometimes as good as a speaking craftiness.

MAXIM VII.

A silent man is only to be esteemed when his silence is seasonable.

REFLECTION.—A MAN may be silent out of dulness, weakness, want of politeness, or pride; such a silence ought not to be imitated, and does

not deserve the approbation of wise men. To read a book whilst others speak, to affect not to hearken to what they say, to look out of a window in time of conversation, all those things expose a man to the contempt of the company; because they may with great reason believe that he despises them; or if they have no reason to suspect it, he must at least be charged with stupidity and want of politeness.

The Witty Man.

MAXIM I.

A witty and satirical saying is enough to spoil the merits of the best work, and the reputation of the most honest men.

REFLECTION.—A WITTY and satirical saying against a man or a work, pleases those that hear it; first, because it is a witty saying, and then, because it is satirical: for men are naturally better pleased to see others criticised, than to see themselves praised; such a pleasing saying will not be forgotten, it will be transmitted by one generation to another, as it appears by the many witty sayings of the ancients; the collections whereof are still extant. From whence it follows, that

they who never saw that man, or that work, and shall never see them, do notwithstanding despise them, and think them to be as imperfect as if they had seen many defects in them with their own eyes. Perhaps he, who spoke those witty words, did it rather to shew his wit, than out of any ill design, or out of love for truth; nevertheless, because those words remain, and the man or the work is not known, men will be prepossessed against them. Hence it is, that a work can hardly recover of a fall caused by some witty and satirical words (our times afford several instances of it) and that a nickname sticks so strongly to a man, that he and his whole posterity will be known by it. The world affords every day several instances of what I say.

MAXIM II.

The salt of witty sayings is the seasoning of a conversation, and makes it agreeable.

REFLECTION.—BUT such a salt must not be thrown by handfuls, as it is practised by those who fancy that the only part they ought to act in company is that of a merry, witty man. There are others of a different character; a man would think that he reads a book when he hears them speak, because they are only for telling the witty sayings of other men, though they be never so old and obsolete. Those witty things are like plate, when it comes to be sold, one must lose the mak-

ing; for when they are repeated, the thing which occasioned them is always wanting; hence it is, that they are commonly but coldly received. A witty saying out of its first place is like a diamond out of its setting, or like a tennis ball taken at a second rebound; they lose a great deal of their force and beauty.

MAXIM III.

A man may bring himself into trouble for having said a witty thing.

REFLECTION.—I LOVE well enough to tell a witty thing, but though I be never so well pleased with it, I use some precautions before I let it go; when a witty thought comes into my mind, I do carefully examine it, I consider what may be the consequence of it, and at last, I tell it, if I think I shall rather please than offend any body; this is the right way to avoid bringing one's self into trouble; thus a man will not lose a solid thing to have the reputation of a witty man. What a strange blindness is it, to do one's self so much wrong for so vain a pleasure! For they who hear a witty thing will often laugh, without having any esteem for the person who told it; the salt of a witty thing tickles their taste, but they do not mind the man who speaks it.

MAXIM IV.

The more a man loves to appear witty, the more he is vexed when others are not affected with what he says.

REFLECTION.—A MAN, who makes it his business to appear witty, is strangely confounded to see every body keep a serious countenance, when he expected they should laugh. Which happens very often; for men are very willing to appear serious, when any body pretends to have the power to take them off from the gravity. Say a witty thing, but do it without any affectation, and so as it may not appear that you are sensible of it; be sure not to applaud yourself for it; for if you prevent others, they will never applaud you; let them find out your wit and relish it.

MAXIM V.

A man does often run the hazard of losing a witty saying, when he gives it as his own.

REFLECTION.—I HAVE often observed it, some men are so envious and so jealous, that the merit of a man, when present, can never please them; they will never own that any body has a true merit, unless he be absent; for his presence would alarm them, and raise their envy and jealousy.

The Droll.

MAXIM I.

Drolleries are good for nothing when a man values them too much, and they are only good when he does not pretend they are so.

REFLECTION.—WHOEVER will please by such things, must not value them more than they are worth, but look upon them as false thoughts and odd expressions, which, surprising the mind, may afford it some pleasure; besides, there ought to be some affinity between those who make use of those thoughts and expressions, and those who hear them; for there are some men, whom it does not become at all to hear them, and others, whom it becomes less still to use them. He that is above others, debases himself when he has got a habit of ridiculing those that are below him. Such a habit is chiefly unworthy of those, who by their elevation or ministry are obliged to put on a grave countenance; it is a stain which spoils the greatest virtues, and cannot be taken off by heroism itself. Every thing ought to be great in those men, such a meanness cannot be borne in them.

MAXIM II.

They who make others laugh are seldom esteemed.

REFLECTION.—IT is said likewise, that they who make jesting their business are like players,

who are very much applauded, though they are little esteemed; they are as much despised, as they make others laugh, especially when they make people laugh by their drolleries; for there is nothing so contemptible as that sort of jesting. I love drolling sometimes, when I think it necessary to keep up a conversation that seems to fall, and to revive it, when it is like to die, and when I do not run the hazard of being accounted a professed jester. My jesting does not hinder me from putting on again a serious countenance, when I think it fit, because I jest by reason, and not out of inclination, or out of an ill habit.

The Jester.

MAXIM I.

Avoid jesting as a snare which your mind lays to your tranquillity.

REFLECTION.—WHATEVER thought, though never so agreeable, and whatever turn of expression, though never so ingenious, comes into my mind to put forth a jest, I never let it go, but when I am sure that the person whom I aim at, will be the first that shall be pleased with it; and because such a thing happens very seldom, it is also but seldom that I jest. If a man forbears jesting, because he knows not how to jest, I praise him for his prudence; if a man forbears jesting,

though he knows how to jest, I praise him for his wisdom. Nobody is liable to censure for not jesting; but one may be censured for doing it. Jesting does sometimes keep up a conversation, but it does commonly divide the jesters. The more a man jests, the fewer friends he has, and the fewer friends he has, the more obstacles he meets with in the course of his fortune. Though Scipio was in great esteem at Rome, though he had a great party in it, yet he could never obtain the office of an Ædile; because, having perceived that one of his competitors had got some callosities in his hands with much ploughing, he asked him in jest, whether he walked upon his hands?

MAXIM II.

A professed jeerer will seldom bear a jest.

REFLECTION.—I BELIEVE that the reason of it is, because they have found out by much jeering others, that jesting is very pernicious to those that are the objects of it. In effect, we see every day, that of all men none will less take a jest than a jesting man. They who jeer others, even wittily, look most wretchedly when they are jeered, and when they happen to be in serious and grave conversations, where they are not allowed to exercise their jesting humour: instead of speaking, they do nothing but gape, or if they speak, they do it so tediously, that they make others gape.

MAXIM III.

Every jest is an injury to some men.

REFLECTION.—SOME are so very sensible and nice, that they cannot be touched without being hurt; one must be very cautious with such men in conversation; they are always offended at a jest; their ill humour finds, or rather produces, some bitterness in the sweetness of the praises bestowed upon them; being very bitter themselves, they find that every thing tastes like gall. I will know a man before I jeer him; it is a necessary precaution, that a merry jest may not turn into a perfect quarrel: and therefore I never use to jest upon rustical, severe, or morose men. I observe this rule, when any body jeers me; if the jest runs upon trifles, I laugh with the jesters; if the jest is injurious to me, and put upon me designedly, I am contented to shew that I know and feel it, to stop the course of it. If they go on, I behave myself towards them as I do towards slandering men; I endeavour to be the better for it, either by reforming myself, if I deserve to be railed at, or by using myself to be patient, if I do not deserve it.

MAXIM IV.

A man given to jesting, ought to have as much regard to his hearers, as to those whom he jeers.

REFLECTION.—A MAN ought to know not only those whom he designs to rally, but also

those who are present. I have often abstained from jeering N—about his vivacity, though he gave me occasion for it; because M—would have taken him for a blunderer, if I had done it. Should I jeer a man about his good husbandry in the presence of certain persons, they would look upon him as a very covetous man: If you jest upon a man who seems to have an affected probity, they will be apt to think that he does not much care to have a true probity.

MAXIM V.

No man will jeer his friend, if he looks upon him as one half of himself.

REFLECTION.—BECAUSE men do naturally hate to be jeered. If I jest upon my friend with reason, I do him wrong; or else I wrong myself at least as much as him. Friendship should always be attended with a privilege against jesting. Friends, who do often jeer one another, begin to fear and shun one another, then they fall out, and at last become enemies.

MAXIM VI.

It is as shameful a thing for a superior to jeer his inferior, as it is for a man well armed to attack a man, who, having no arms, cannot defend himself.

REFLECTION.—IT does not become at all those who are raised above others, to jest upon those

that are below them; they get no glory by it; how could it be glorious for them to attack in such a manner those that depend on them, who, out of fear and respect, dare not so much as to complain of it? It is therefore no less cruel than shameful a thing, for great men to jest upon the little ones; because a dart will make a deeper wound, if thrown from a high place, and because their dignity, joined with the malignity and flattering approbation of those who hear them, will poison those wounds, so as to make them almost incurable.

MAXIM VII.

When a man jests upon religion, it is a great sign he has none.

REFLECTION.—THE design of jesting is chiefly to shew in a sharp and ingenious way the ridiculousness of some men, or to make them appear ridiculous when they are not so. If it be so, how can any one persuade himself that a man has any religion, when he makes jest of it? There is nothing that deserves so much our respect and veneration as religion; but can we be said to respect it, if we jest upon it, and by that means expose it to the contempt of other men? There are things enough in the world, that deserve to be laughed at; why should we therefore make so bold with religion? Its greatness ought to make us sensible of our meanness, its authority requires our obedience, and its holiness and purity should make

us tremble, whenever we think of throwing the darts of our rash censures upon it. Certainly we would never jest upon religion, if we were fully persuaded of its truths, and if we were exact observers of its precepts. It is the rule of our duties; if we laugh at it, how shall we perform those duties? For it is almost impossible that we should live according to a rule, which we think deserves to be laughed at. Religion is too serious a thing to make a jest of it; and unrespectful jesting can never become religion. No man will ever attain to perfection, if he ridicules that which only can make him perfect.

The Disputer.

MAXIM I.

The disputes of learned men about doctrine, or matters of fact, will frequently turn into personal quarrels.

REFLECTION.—WHEN men dispute, they are first angry with arguments, and then with men; they make a great noise, they give hard words, they cause a great disturbance, they fly out into a passion. I have known some, whose strongest arguments lay in the strength of their lungs. "Our "disputes should be forbidden and punished, as "other verbal crimes; how many vices do they

"not stir, and heap up, being always ruled and "commanded by anger? It is a silly thing to make "a fight of a sport." How many errors have been introduced into religion by disputes! How many offences against charity! How many doubts in the minds of men! At first, the love of truth seems to occasion a dispute, afterwards pride keeps it up, and at last anger puts an end to it. "Every time a man meets with any opposition in "a dispute, he does not consider whether it be "right or wrong, but only what defence he shall "make; he makes use of claws instead of arms." As for me, I am never offended when any body contradicts my judgment; makes no alteration in me. "Contradictions do but quicken my spirits, "and exercise me; they raise my attention, and "not my anger." It happens so often that I am contrary to myself, that I easily use myself to be contradicted by others. "My imagination con-"tradicts and condemns itself so often, that it is "all one to me, whether another man does it." Why should I abuse those who are of a different opinion from me? Have they not the same liberty that I have, to tell their mind? Is the question about them or about me in that dispute? Shall I make my arguments stronger by giving them hard words? Shall I bring them over to my opinion if I insult them? Will ill words and insults open a safer way for me to find out truth, which is the thing I ought to aim at in a dispute.

MAXIM II.

Never dispute with a design to contradict others, but to instruct yourself.

REFLECTION.—I NEVER oppose another man's opinion, but in order to bring him over to truth; before I oppose him, I examine whether I have a sufficient authority and capacity, and the other necessary qualifications to get the victory; but because I do not easily flatter myself that I have them, I seldom dispute with any body; or if I do, it is soon done, and in a few words. Disputes would be managed with more calmness and prudence, if that rule was carefully observed; they would be more useful, and truth would not be so much slighted as it is. By the usual way of disputing, one would think that men learn to dispute only to excel in the art of contradicting others; they are not fond of truth, but of their own opinions, whatever they be. When the dispute is over, they are of the same mind as they were before; they only think upon the arguments they made use of, and shut their eyes against those that were alleged against them. What injustice! What infatuation! What a fondness of one's opinions!

If I persist to contradict any body, he will be apt to think that I fancy I have better parts than he; that is not my design, and therefore I do not persist in it; I favour as much as I can the opinions of other men; I am glad when I can approve them; nay, I am willing to fancy that they may

be true, because they are approved by some; I can bear to be contradicted; if I do not approve my own opinions as much as others desire I should, it is because I think they do not deserve an entire approbation; for I have a better opinion of others than of myself, and I think it very ridiculous to dispute for dispute's sake.

Lastly, if I dispute, I do it only to clear the truth, and not to get the victory; and therefore I take all possible care not to imitate those who perplex the subject in question with preambles and tedious expressions, who make long excursions, and go so much about that one may easily perceive they are rather for entangling the matter, than for proving it. When I advance a proposition, which I have reason to believe to be true, if it be rejected as false, I speak thus to myself: "Perhaps it is "my own fault; perhaps I do not express myself "well, I do not speak to the purpose, I am too "haughty, or they have not reason enough to have "a great esteem for me, and therefore it is no "wonder if they do not believe me." Thus I do not pretend at all times that others are in the wrong, when they contradict me; thus being not over fond of my own reasons, I am better disposed to hear their's. There is nothing finer than to yield to truth when we perceive it, and to embrace it earnestly, when we have unjustly departed from it. "To change one's mind, to mend one's "self, and to abandon an ill party, are rare, noble "and philosophical qualities." A man may know thereby the force of his mind, and the power he

has over himself; it will appear that he is not overruled by his prejudices, and that he is persuaded that nothing can be more noble than to yield to reason. "*Non est levitas a cognito et "damnato errore discedere.*"

MAXIM III.

Never make a trifling thing the subject of a great dispute.

REFLECTION.—I NEVER contend with any body about frivolous and trifling things; for I have often observed, that a mere trifle will deprive men of the pleasure and advantage of conversation; because it makes them hot, and keeps them from discoursing of more useful and more necessary things. Disputing will make some indifferent things very considerable by their consequences. But above all things, never dispute with great men about trifles; whoever gets the victory over them, will be sure to lose it. They are much above you, and therefore they will soon depress you in some material things, to make amends for the trouble you give them, by surpassing them in some indifferent things. Whoever crosses the great inclination they have to distinguish themselves every where, exasperates and alarms them; they have always a sufficient power ready to oppress those who resist them. "I never dispute "with a prince who has four and twenty legions "at his command," said a philosopher to the em-

peror Adrian. Great men are commonly very fond of their opinions, and maintain them with obstinacy; because they, who approach them, dare not contradict them, by reason of their riches, authority and power; so that being used to continual applauses, they think that they are always in the right. I pity those, who, being in prosperity, will hear nothing but what flatters them; because they never know the beauty of truth and reason.

MAXIM IV.

The reason why disputes do commonly last a long time, is because the disputants are a long time without understanding one another.

REFLECTION.—EVERY body is so full of his own thoughts, and so fond of his own arguments, that he has much ado to hear with any attention the reasons of other men. How many disputes are there in the world, because men do not, or will not, understand one another! "He "that will not understand what is said to him, "does not apprehend what is proposed to him, he "is so far engaged in his course, though he does "not think of following you, but himself." This want of attention, on both sides, is the reason why a man does not answer the objections of his adversary to advantage; the latter thinks himself obliged to enlarge upon them, in hopes of making them more intelligible; the former, who is rather

for objecting than for answering, is not very well understood by the latter, who has been more attentive than he; so that after much time, they are not better instructed when the dispute is over, than they were when it begun; lastly, each of them goes home more fond of his opinion than he was before, for he thinks it may be the better maintained, because he maintained it a long while.

MAXIM V.

Some men in their disputes, measure the worth of their arguments by the number and weight of their words.

REFLECTION.—THEY think to drown their adversaries with a torrent flux of words, or at least, to overthrow them by the weight of their pronunciation. Such things may deceive those, who, wanting strength, suffer themselves to be surprised and carried away by any thing that puts them in motion. "Methinks that implication and "intermingling of words whereby they urge us, "are like the tricks of jugglers; their nimbleness "forces our senses, but shakes not our belief in "the least; abating their juggling tricks, they do "nothing but what is common and mean." I hear that sort of disputants, as I hear the long train of words, or the pendantical pronunciation of the doctor on the stage; they divert me, but they make no other impression upon me.

MAXIM VI.

Silence is not always the sign of discretion in a dispute.

REFLECTION.—THE man mentioned by Montaigne may be an example of it. "He resolves to "be silent in the heat of a dispute, out of a spiteful "ignorance, affecting a proud contempt, or a "modest, but foolish shunning of contention." Vanity will never lose any thing, it will indemnify itself as much as possible; a man knows not what to answer it is a mortifying thing; but then he will be silent, to make others believe that he does not vouchsafe to speak, or that there is nothing more convincing that can be added to what he said; and so he hopes to give no advantage over him to his adversaries. But whilst he pleases himself thus in private, he does not avoid being criticised or jested upon, because every body knows the true motive, which obliges him to let go his hold. I wonder how any man can deceive himself in that manner, seeing a little attention will easily enable him to discover such a motive. Does he pretend to surpass all others in penetration? But when I reflect upon the blindness, which does often proceed from self love, I give over wondering at it. As for me, when any one attacks my opinions with such arguments as I cannot answer, I do sincerely own my ignorance; nevertheless, I do not believe always that my adversary is in the right, though he presses me so hard, because I consider that a man of better parts

might perhaps answer him. I am not in suspense out of obstinacy, but out of reason, and a sincere love for truth, and because I will not have ignorance to be the rule of my belief.

MAXIM VII.

We are not commonly so much displeased with the opinions of other men, as we are with their passionate, presumptuous, haughty, and obstinate manner of maintaining them.

REFLECTION.—I AM very willing to hear a man, who makes only use of arguments to convince me of his opinion; but if he pretends to strengthen them by some passionate demonstrations, he stirs me against him, I begin to mistrust him, which will, perhaps, hinder me from perceiving the whole strength of his arguments. Men are so unwilling to be thwarted in their opinions, that there is no need to make them more uneasy still by the manner of doing it. Whoever undertakes to humble and mortify a man, will find it very difficult to get his approbation.

MAXIM VIII.

A man ought to be very sure of a fact, before he disputes about the manner of it, or its nature and properties.

REFLECTION.—I PLACE disputes about uncertain matters of fact amongst the trifling disputes I have already mentioned, for they are all equally needless. But perhaps it will be said, "That "the more a man disputes about any subject, what-"ever it be, the more he cultivates his mind." To which I add, that he will be the more contentious and contradicting. Alas! let us be contented with such disputes as will instruct us in necessary things; the little knowledge we have of truth, affords us many occasions for it. But it will be further said, "Your reflection is as need-"less, as you pretend that those disputes are; for "there are too many men whose interest it is to "dispute, and to teach others how to dispute in "vain." Well, if my reflection is of no use to the publick, I shall be contented to make it useful to myself by forbearing to dispute, except it be to take and maintain the party, of truth and reason in such things as are worthy of reason and truth. *Montaigne* speaks agreeably of those needless disputes in this manner. "I was thinking now, as I "often do, of human reason, how it is a free, loose "instrument. I observe that men, when any "matters of fact are proposed to them, will sooner "inquire into the reasons, than into the truth of "them; they pass over the suppositions, but they

"do curiously examine the consequences; they "leave the things, and run to their causes. A "pretty sort of prattling men! they commonly "begin thus; how is it done; but, they should "say, is there any such thing? I find that we "should say most times, there is no such thing, "and I would often use that answer, but I dare "not; for they cry out that it is a shift which "proceeds from weakness and ignorance, so that "I am obliged to play the juggler for company "sake, and to discourse of frivolous matters, which "I do not believe at all. Besides, it must be con- "fest, that it would be a rude thing to deny flatly "a matter of fact, especially if we consider that "most men will affirm that they have seen such "a thing, though it be never so difficult to believe, "or allege some witnesses, whom we dare not "contradict. According to this custom we know "the grounds and means of a thousand things "which did never exist." There are so many real things, the study whereof may be useful to us, that we can never too much blame those who spend their time in searching the reasons of things that have no existence, and who divert the force of their minds to the prejudice of truth. It were much better to maintain that those facts are mere fables than to reason about them.

The Opiniater.

MAXIM I.

An opiniater does not yield because he is resolved never to yield.

REFLECTION.—AN opiniater does not always remain obstinate for want of knowing that he is in the wrong, but because he is resolved to be obstinate. The only way to lead him to the knowledge of truth is, to make him fancy that he has found it without the help of any body. They that go by the name of opiniaters, must be dealt with, with great prudence; they hate all manner of resistance; they are naturally stubborn, refractory to truth, and obstinately bent against reason; they are so conceited of themselves, that they never ask any body's advice. If any one should advise them to any thing which they are resolved to do, they change their resolution, because they will not be directed by any but themselves. They never confess that they were mistaken; and therefore there are no men less capable of attaining to any perfection. One may with great reason despair of those who will not hearken to truth. I have not so good an opinion of myself, and I am not so fond of the esteem of other men, as to suffer myself to be thus governed by obstinacy; for an opiniater fancies that he is a man of a great merit, or would make others believe it.

MAXIM II.

The best way to deal with an opiniater, is to be silent.

REFLECTION.—WHEN an opiniater disputes against me, I choose to be silent; because I have learned by experience, that men of such a character will never acknowledge truth when they have begun to oppose it. I am persuaded, that my silence will work more upon him than my resistance. If I say nothing to him, I shall give him time to yield to reason; if I oppose him, I shall afford him matter to exercise his obstinacy.

The Heedless and Inconsiderate Man.

MAXIM I.

Inconsiderateness is the cause of most faults that are committed in the commerce of the world.

REFLECTION.—BECAUSE an inconsiderate man is a man without attention, that is to say, a man who wants what is absolutely necessary to him for the conduct of his life. An inconsiderate man is chiefly known by his discourse; he speaks without considering what he says, and without penetrating into the consequences of it. Therefore when he recollects himself after a conversation, he is ashamed of all the rash and improper

things he has said, for want of attention. Old men, who are commonly more attentive, will often rake into their youth, and remember those things with sorrow. The more a man is attentive, the less inconsiderate he will be.

MAXIM II.

A heedless man speaks and hears wrong.

REFLECTION.—A HEEDLESS man hears only by halves what is said to him, and so his answer to one part of it makes a perfect nonsense. This want of attention is often the cause of so many false stories, which spread themselves in the world, and of so many false reports, which occasion great disorders; because the heedless man supplies by his invention, what he did not hear for want of attention. He has heard some particulars of a fact, and he will relate them out of inconsiderateness; but because he thought of something else, when the essential circumstances of that fact were related to him, he relates instead of them those that come into his mind; because he has inconsiderately begun his discourse, without much caring whether he was well informed of what he had a mind to say. I cannot rely upon a heedless and inconsiderate man. It is true, that some of them are equitable, honest and religious men; but their want of attention may spoil their most excellent qualities; though they design no harm,

they may do mischief by their heedless and unseasonable words. Do not we see very often that they ruin their own affairs by such an indiscretion? They are incapable of any precaution, yet there is nothing more necessary than precaution, to avoid the artifices and deceits which we are so much exposed to. But they prejudice others as well as themselves; for they act and speak with so much inadvertency, that it is a difficult thing to be secure from the impetuous motions of their precipitation; they surprise others as much as they surprise themselves. I am always uneasy when my circumstances oblige me to keep correspondence with an inconsiderate man: for I run the hazard of losing my life, my honour and estate by him. There are two remedies which we might make use of against such disorders. The first, sincerely to acknowledge that he is a heedless, inconsiderate man; such an acknowledgment would dispose him to be more attentive; and to use the second remedy, I mean to observe other inconsiderate men, who fall very often into a dangerous indiscretion, which he may easily observe; to avoid speaking inconsiderately, I use to make a reflection before I say *yes* or *no*: I do carefully examine, whether it be my duty to grant or refuse any thing, and what can make the granting or refusing of it good. Lastly, I have always an eye upon all the steps I make, because I know that the defects of our actions proceed from want of attention. If men were more attentive they would be less faulty. I converse with myself to learn

how to converse with others. A man must often descend into himself by the way of attention, if he will come out of himself with honour by the way of speech.

The Complimenter.

MAXIM I.

Compliments are authorized by use; therefore every body ought to make only as many compliments, and such as use requires.

REFLECTION.—THOUGH I am persuaded that compliments are only outward actions, wherein the heart has often no share; yet I receive and return them with civility. It is a ceremony established by use, I will not therefore be singular; how many words against the rules and how many constructions against grammar established by use, which a man must comply with, if he will speak well! No man should be deceived by those ceremonious appearances; for every body ought to know that they are mere appearances. I confess, that it is a troublesome thing to be obliged to use so many words, which do not agree with our sentiments. "What vanity and loss of time in visits, "salutations, mutual discourses, harangues, cere-"monies, offers, promises and praises; how many "exaggerations and lies, what hypocrisy and im-

"posture, known to every body, to those who "receive and who hear them! so that it looks as if "men were agreed to mock at and deceive one "another. He who knows that another man tells "him an imprudent lie, must say, I thank ye; and "the latter, who knows that the other does not "believe him, must keep a good countenance; "they watch one another to know who shall "begin, and who shall end, though both of them "would be glad to be gone." All those things are but too true; but it is an universal comedy, which every body is obliged to act upon the stage of the world, when he has any part to play in it. Oh! what a charming liberty would it be for a man, if he was allowed to come into a company, and leave it without any troublesome ceremonies! I should like such a liberty very well; yet I conform myself to the taste of the publick. I live with men, I must therefore observe the customs which are generally observed by men. The use of compliments is a kind of a commerce of officious lies, whereby few people are deceived; for few people take them for any thing else but what they are. However, nobody ought to be excessive in his compliments. "I have often seen some men, "that were uncivil by too much civility, and "troublesome by their courtesy." I am apt to mistrust a great complimenter; because I fancy that when a man is capable of so much dissembling, he is but too much disposed to deceive others; unless we suppose that he has been so ill educated as to believe that compliments make the essential and principal part of politeness.

The Man who praises Others.

MAXIM I.

Praises are extremely sweet and agreeable, when they are judicious.

REFLECTION.—WE must not praise others as most men do, who rather praise those that are praised by others, than those that deserve it. Wise men do not care for such praises; they know that they are bestowed without reflection; and therefore they receive them without gratitude. I praise D— L— without minding what others think of him; I praise him only because he seems to me to deserve it. I praise any thing, when I have a good reason for it; we share in a good action, when we praise it heartily. Praises are so common, and bestowed with so much indiscretion, that I cannot believe that a man of great sense will be pleased with them. When N— praises me, and when I reflect upon the praises which he bestowed a little before upon that great man, who neglects all the duties of probity and religion, I think myself rather despised and insulted, than praised and applauded. I do not love to be praised by those whom I do not think to be worthy of praise.

MAXIM II.

It is a ridiculous thing to praise a man for such things as are not properly his own.

REFLECTION.—PRAISE a man for such things as can neither be given him, nor taken from him, and which do truly belong to him; that is to say, praise him for his sound reason, his good judgment, and his wise conduct. Man is a reasonable creature; he is therefore perfect, when he is such as his nature requires he should be; whoever praises him for any thing else, praises him for that which does not belong to him, and makes him ashamed of himself; because such praises shew that he does not think him to be worthy of praise upon his own account. I look upon the praises that are bestowed upon me, when I do not deserve them, as so many reproaches for wanting that which would make me worthy of them, and as so many advices that are given me, to let me know that I am obliged to acquire it. Instead of growing vain upon the account of those praises, I grow the better for them; I think of curing myself, instead of flattering my illness.

MAXIM III.

They who do not deserve to be praised, are often sparing of their praises.

REFLECTION.—BEING sensible that they have no merit, they are unwilling to acknowledge the

merit of others. They look upon the praises, which they might bestow upon them, as so many reproaches to themselves. Nevertheless, praises are an homage which we ought to pay to perfection; nay, it is the interest of the publick to pay such an homage to those who deserve it, because it does very much contribute to increase the excellency of arts and sciences, raising the emulation of those who profess them: praises when deserved, inflame the courage of a man, which would otherwise grow cold. Men think themselves obliged to exert their faculties in proportion to what others expect from them; they are willing to preserve the reputation they have got, and whilst they endeavour to be always like themselves, they will often surpass themselves. I add, that a man by much praising others, is in some manner worthy of praise, because he pays to every one his due, and is in a disposition of practising what he has so much praised.

MAXIM IV.

They who praise men only to please them, betray their judgment by too much complaisance.

REFLECTION.—THEY, who praise others merely to please them, will be easily prepossest in favour of those whom they praise. When the will is resolved to praise, it forces the judgment to find matter for it, and then a man betrays his judgment by too much complaisance. He betrays it more

themselves. They, who are never so much worthy of esteem, cease to be so, when they take care to esteem themselves; and, therefore, when they have much praised themselves, they must not expect that others should praise them. The praises which a man bestows upon himself, make others believe that he is extremely self-conceited and vain, and consequently raise their contempt, envy and hatred.

MAXIM VI.

Praises are often a mere interested commerce.

REFLECTION.—THERE are many men, who praise others not so much for their glory, as for their own interest. They are willing to commend them, in hopes of getting something by it. Praises are dexterous, hidden and delicate flatteries, which please differently those who bestow them, and those who receive them; the first bestow them, to shew their wit and penetration; the latter receive them as a reward of their merit. Amongst those who bestow their praises, some will do it to be praised in their turn; others to open a way to their fortune; some to avoid a loss, others to afford some pleasure to themselves; and most of those who are praised, receive praises as heartily as if their glory was the sole object of them. Whoever commends a man, in hopes of a liberality, looks upon him as a mill, which affords no more meal than it has wind for. One must needs be an

excessive lover of praise, to suffer himself to be ensnared by such *praisers*, not considering that the same principle of interest, which moveth them to speak well of him, may move them to the contrary, if it be for their advantage; they will prefer the worst of men to him, if they are more favourable to them; when they are forced to give a good character of him, and to do him justice upon the account of his good qualities, they will be sure to poison their praises with some malicious remarks upon his defects, to make them more odious, and expose him to the contempt of others. If I was desirous of praises, I should not value those that are bestowed by such men; I had rather be unknown to them, than be commended by them; if I was unknown to them, they would do me no harm; whereas, after they have praised me, they will perhaps endeavour to prejudice me by a kind of revenge, if I do not reward them as much as they think they deserve, for having applauded me; or if they hope to be better rewarded by my enemies.

MAXIM VII.

It is likely that a man is sincere in his praises, if he dares blame you, when he thinks you are to blame.

REFLECTION.—THIS is so true, that they who design to flatter a man nicely with their praises, affect, in order to make them appear more sincere, to find something in him that may be criticised. But, abating of such an artifice, it is certain that

when men seem to be sincerely inclined to blame any thing that deserves to be blamed, we are very apt to believe, that what they praise is truly praiseworthy. Indeed, it were to be wished, that men would behave themselves in such a manner; they would be then more eager to attain to perfection, because it would be more sincerely cherished; and vices would be more abhorred, because they would be more earnestly assaulted.

MAXIM VIII.

Seek not to be praised, but think only of deserving it.

REFLECTION.—MEN are so inconstant and capricious, that whoever depends upon their applause, for his credit and satisfaction, will miss both of them; let us be contented to do good and commendable actions; we can never be deprived of the merit of them. "Ambition is a perfect folly "and vanity! For an ambitious man takes the "smoke for the light, and the shadow for the body; "he makes the tranquillity of his mind to depend "upon the opinion of the vulgar; he willingly "deprives himself of his liberty, to be governed "by the passions of other men; he makes himself "uneasy, to please those that look upon him; he "loves virtue according as *the people* love it; he "does good, not for the sake of virtue, but for the "sake of his reputation; he is like a pierced cask, "nothing will come out of it, unless you give it "wind." A merit, that deserves praises, may be

spoiled by too much of it. An ingenious author says, and I repeat it after him, "Not but that I "love commendations, especially when they are "bestowed by men who are good judges of virtue; "but I am afraid of loving them too much. They "corrupt men; they make them self-conceited, "vain and presumptuous; we ought to be worthy "of them, and shun them; the best praises are like "the false ones; the worst of men have been most "praised by flatterers; what pleasure is there in "being praised as they have been? Good praises "are those which you will bestow upon me in my "absence, if I am so happy as to deserve them; "if you think that I am a truly good man, you "ought to believe also that I design to be modest, "and to avoid vanity. Spare me, therefore, if "you have any esteem for me, and do not praise "me as a man that is greedy of praises." If I content myself with the pleasure of being praised, the commendation bestowed upon me will be either false, and not belong to me, or, if it is true, it will either be gross or clumsy, or artificial, and well turned; if the commendation is foreign and false, it will make me ridiculous by being misapplied; if it is gross and ill managed, I shall be ashamed of it. But if the colours be handsomely touched, and laid on with art, I may probably grow vain upon the compliment; but if I have a true merit, I shall not be vain, nor ridiculous, nor ashamed of myself.

MAXIM IX.

It is a kind of injury done to a man, not to praise him dexterously.

REFLECTION.—THOUGH men be never so vain, yet they will not own that they are so; but those, who praise a man without any moderation, act as if they would oblige him to acknowledge his vanity, or at least, as they would make others believe, that he is a vain man; and by such a conduct they will rather excite his indignation than his gratitude. We need not drive vanity out of its intrenchments; for it has much ado to hide itself. Praise a man, without seeming to praise him.

MAXIM X.

It requires a great skill to find out a just medium in our praises.

REFLECTION.—WE must not pretend by our praises to make a dwarf of a giant, or a giant of a dwarf. In the first case, we seem to doubt of the merit of those whom we praise; because we do not praise them as much as we should do. In the second case, we banter ourselves or others; but let us rather say, that our excessive praises excite curiosity, and stir up envy; so that if a man's merit does not answer the value that was set upon it, as it often happens, general opinion and com-

mon sense will discover the cheat, and turn the *praiser* and the *praised man* into ridicule. Proportioned praises are commonly very acceptable; they are like a suit of clothes well made, which pleases those that look upon it, and neither straitens nor clogs the man who wears it.

MAXIM XI.

We must have as much regard to those who hear our praises, as to those upon whom we bestow them.

REFLECTION.—N— is an excellent poet; but I take care not to say so to M— when he reads his poems to me. Such praises would be very unseasonable; M— would look upon them as an insult and a reproach. It would be likewise a very improper thing to praise an inferior before his superior, about a merit to which both of them do equally pretend, or to applaud in the presence of a friend, a man who abused him.

MAXIM XII.

A man who is extremely fond of praises, would have nobody but himself to be praised.

REFLECTION.—THIS is the reason why N— will neither praise others, nor hear them praised. He fancies that the praises bestowed upon them, are as many things stolen from him; yet he assures

me, that it is only out of love for truth. I do not know whether I ought to believe him; for I have often observed, that he is not at all unwilling to be praised for the good qualities he has not. Though you speak never so well of him, you tell him nothing that is new to him; he knows that he has it, before you tell him, or at least he flatters himself with it, and if he seems to refuse at any time the praises which he justly deserves, it is only in order to be more praised than he deserves, or to have a right to praise nobody.

The Flatterer.

MAXIM I.

We are our first flatterers.

REFLECTION.—WE do certainly flatter ourselves, before any body else thinks of flattering us. Do we not flatter ourselves, when we presume too much upon our talents, when we are fond of our opinions, when we persuade ourselves that we are more perfect than others? What could flatterers do more with respect to us? They praise our thoughts, they applaud our opinions, and admire our conduct. Well! are we not willing to be accounted wise in our actions, exact in our opinions, and penetrating in our thoughts? These are the doors which we always keep open to flat-

tery; and there are but too many men, whose interest it is to go through them. Men never shut altogether the door against flatterers; at most, they push it gently upon them; but they always leave it a little open. Let us hear a flatterer speak; here are his words, very agreeable to the intention and sentiments of all those of his profession. "I have won," says he, "the heart of that "man, by a cunning submission, and a subtle com- "plaisance; I can now persuade him to any thing "in the world. What would it avail me to have "received that happy talent from heaven, if I did "not make an advantage of the weakness of men? "Their love of praises, and their foolish pride, is "the greatest of all; and I have made it my study "to deceive them that way, since they will be "deceived. I know how to praise their faults, to "comply with their passions, and to applaud their "folly: I apply myself to know their weak side, "and I conform all my actions to theirs. Are they "merry? I am so too. Are they melancholy? I "am more melancholy than they; and by that "means they cannot be without me; I make them "slaves to my applauses, and I chain them to my "complaisance. Thus a dexterous man knows "how to improve the folly of great men to his ad- "vantage; that is the door through which so many "people enter into the palace of fortune. I have "no land, no houses, no income; but I know how "to praise a man who has them. That is my "estate, the income whereof is casual, but it is a "solid inheritance, and the foolish vanity of men

"is a lasting fund."* Such is the condition which we are reduced to, by reason of self love, the greatest of all flatterers. Let us not flatter ourselves, and nobody will dare to flatter us. If flatterers did not perceive that we are willing to be accounted considerable men, they would not give themselves the trouble to prove it to us. The desire of being flattered, is the reason why the civil society is, properly speaking, a commerce of official lies and false praises. Men flatter one another, to be flattered in their turn; their mutual praises make them conceited; the vices of other men go with them by the name of virtues, that they may conceal their own; and they think it a piece of politeness to deceive others, and a pleasure to be deceived. They do not love truth, because it makes them uneasy, and therefore they must be told flattering lies. Those reflections are as many instructions, which teach us, that, the more we love to flatter ourselves, the farther we are from perfection; because, as long as we dissemble our own faults, and will not allow others to shew them to us on their worst side, we shall take no care to mend them. I had rather nobody should speak of me, than that they should praise me too much; if they say nothing of me, I shall not suffer by it; but if they praise me too much, they will raise the envy of other men against me, and at the same time they will excite their curiosity; so that if it be found that I am unworthy of the praises that are bestowed upon me (which

* *The Flatterer*, a play.

may very well happen, because it is a difficult thing to come up to the great opinion they have of me) instead of being esteemed, I shall appear very contemptible; and so for a false glory, wherewith a flatterer feeds us, he exposes us to a real infamy. Flattery is so far from being advantageous to us, that it spoils the good qualities we have. After all, if people are resolved to flatter me, the flatterers get less by me than I get by them; they get nothing by me, because I have been so careful to know myself, that I shall not be deceived by their impostures: I get by them, because their flatteries are as many instructions, which teach me what I ought to be.

MAXIM II.

Flatterers, who praise great men for an imaginary merit, lull them asleep in real miseries.

REFLECTION.—GREAT men do extremely love to flatter themselves, and consequently desire to be flattered; they will be applauded in proportion to their grandeur and elevation. Being little satisfied with the advantages which their power affords them, they are also very fond of the esteem of other men, and grow formidable to those who do not make them sensible that they believe they deserve to be esteemed. They have rewards and punishments in their hands, which they may dispose of at their will; and therefore they never want flatterers, who have no other motives for

" ering assiduity, but fear and interest.
we y flatterers, who make it their business
gre great men in their faults by an affected
se nce; to take some ingenious turns in
fl set off an outside of virtue, which has
hat is great or solid; to throw a veil upon
for fear they should be offended at it; and
make them incorrigible, by persuading them
at they are excusable! "Flatterers are worse
"than those whom they flatter, and their baseness
"is the cause of the pride and insolence of other
"men; they corrupt their modesty by admiring
"their grandeur, and crying up their riches;
"whereas, if they would renounce with an unani-
"mous consent that voluntary servitude, great
"men would be ready to court them, and desire
"them to take a view of their happiness, for fear
"it should be of no use to them. What would it
"avail them to have so many superfluous dishes
"upon their table, if there was nobody to taste of
"them, for they themselves do not very often taste
"of them, and plenty begets disgust? Of what use
"would their rich goods and magnificent palaces
"be, if nobody came to see them? For these
"things are not so considerable in themselves, as
"because they are valued, and the possession
"thereof is thought to make a man happy." The complaisance of flatterers is so extravagant, that it is even ridiculous. Philip of Macedonia, having been obliged to put on a head-band, because he had been wounded in the head, most of his courtiers appeared with the same apparel, as if they had been wounded. The younger Dionysius

being very short sighted, his courtiers, to flatter him, made as if they had been half blind, knocking one another, and stumbling at every turn. Combalus, a favourite of Seleucus, whom queen Stratonice was passionately in love with, having made himself an eunuch, to give no occasion to calumny, all those who depended upon him for their fortune did the same. Because Mithridates loved to practise chirurgery, his flatterers would have him to cut and cauterize their members, without any necessity for it. Plato's flatterers counterfeited his huge shoulders; those of Aristotle, his lisping; and those of Alexander the Great, his bending head, and the sharpness of his voice. Nothing can be more nauseous than a professed adulator, who, out of a base compliance, applauds every thing that he hears, without distinguishing what is true from what is false, and what is good from what is ill. "I beseech you to "say, once at least, *no*, that I may perceive that "we are two," said the orator Cœlius to a flatterer.

But flatterers make themselves more odious still, by applauding the faults of those whom they flatter; by suggesting some reasons to them to justify their injustices; by affording them some pretences to indulge themselves in their ill practices; and by shewing them the way of satisfying their passions. The chief magistrates of Persia told Cambyses, who had a mind to marry his sister, that indeed they could find no law that allowed of such a marriage; but that there was one, which permitted the king to do whatever he pleased. "Alas! how unhappy is he who is above

"the rest of men! He cannot very often see the "truth with his own eyes; he is surrounded with "people, who keep it from coming to him; it is "the interest of every one to deceive him; every "body covers his ambition with a pretence of "zeal; they pretend to love the prince, and they "love only the riches he bestows; they love him "so little, that they flatter and betray him to ob-"tain his favours." We may therefore believe that great men do not so much deserve to be censured as their flatterers;—let us pity the unhappiness of the former, and detest the malice of the latter. "There is none of us but would be worse "than kings, if he were continually corrupted by "such rascals as they are." The best antidote we can have against that plague of mankind, is to repel, by an humble acknowledgment of our defects, the pride wherewith flatterers endeavour to inspire us, and to give them no hopes of obtaining any favours from us. The most glorious praise that we can wish for, is to have some perfections, without desiring that they should be spoken of. Perfection is truly solid, when it is not kept up by empty vanity.

MAXIM III.

Men will often cover and flatter the defects of others, to hide their own.

REFLECTION.—IT is true, that very often the reason why men flatter others, is because they desire to be flattered. By excusing the faults of

others, they hope that their own will be excused; but this is a pretended commerce of gratitude, which seldom affords a real advantage. Men are never the better of all those flatteries; and they who are proud of them will be pitied by those who hear them. Let us call to mind how much we despised those who relished the pleasure of flattery, that we may be convinced of the contempt we shall lie under, if we suffer ourselves to be deceived by the same charm.

MAXIM IV.

No man ought to avoid the character of a flatterer so as to become a brutish man.

REFLECTION.—I SEE but too many men, who, to avoid one excess, run into another; how difficult is it to keep a just medium! It is a good thing not to flatter vice; but it is an ill thing to be always unwilling to praise virtue. Whoever refuses to applaud virtue, seems to disapprove it, or at least gives occasion to think, that he is tormented with envy or jealousy against those, whose actions he will never approve, though they be never so worthy of approbation. Men are commonly willing to censure those whom they have so much ado to praise; and therefore all those, who out of an affected niceness of conscience, will never praise any body, are commonly insupportable in the commerce of the world; because instead of a sweet complaisance, they shew nothing but bitterness and severity.

The Liar.

MAXIM I.

A liar is hated by God and despised by men.

REFLECTION.—IT is a base weakness, which, making us afraid of men, moves us to betray truth by a lie; and because baseness and weakness are contemptible, it does naturally follow that liars must be despised. But whilst a liar stands in fear of men, he shews that he does not fear God; seeing notwithstanding the perfect knowledge which God has of our most secret thoughts, and most artificial treasons, he dares to insult truth, that is, God himself; wherefore he becomes the object of his hatred; for a false man can never be the object of his love. Lying is so base a thing, that the greatest liars cannot bear it in other men. Truth is so worthy of God and men, that we do acknowledge we ought to pay our homage to it, though we do not do it. When we depart from truth, an inward reason, which we can never stifle, gives us a secret check, which would bring us back to our duty, were it not for the deprivation of our minds. We lie to satisfy our passions, and the habit of lying grows so strong upon us, that after we have deceived others, we deceive ourselves; which is the cause of our wrong reasonings, of our false steps, of our odd undertakings, of our projects without execution, and of our disorderly conduct; because we are not directed

by truth, and yet it is the only good guide we can have. "The banishment of truth is the first "stroke of the corruption of manners." There is nothing I fear so much as to be false; for if I am a false man, I shall neither agree with God, nor with men, nor with myself.

MAXIM II.

A liar is not to be trusted.

REFLECTION.—EVERY deceit is odious to men; every liar is subject to deceive others; therefore every liar is odious to those with whom he converses. Nobody can rely upon him, because there is no relying upon his words, which seldom agree with his thoughts. "Certainly "lying is a great vice. We are tied to one another "only by speech; our understandings being di- "rected by no other way than that of words, he, "who speaks falsely, betrays the publick society. "It is the only instrument, whereby we impart "our thoughts; it is the interpreter of our souls; "if this conveyance of our minds fail us, we are "perfectly at a loss, and know nothing of one "another; if it deceives us, it breaks all our cor- "respondence, and dissolves the bond of our poli- "cy." Truth itself is not credited in the mouth of a liar; because his want of sincerity makes us look upon it as a lie, when he speaks it. As for me, when I am sure that a man is a liar, I hear him as a teller of idle stories; and those stories

afford me a morality, as Æsop's fables; for my aversion for lying increases, by considering how much liars are hated by every body.

The Boaster.

MAXIM I.

They who have the least courage, are often the boldest in their words.

REFLECTION.—WHY does a man boast himself, unless it be to extort, if I may say so, from those who hear him a belief, which he knows he does not deserve? His doubting to obtain easily what he desires, makes me distrust what he says, and experience teaches me that we are both in the right; for I have always observed that the actions of great boasters are very much inferior to their words. The words of a boaster say only that he is a brave man; but his actions only prove that he is really so; and if he was more active than he is, he would certainly speak less. They who are only for speaking, do very much neglect the performance of any thing. A man who hopes to impose upon others by his boasting, (which is no difficult thing) does not much care to do great actions, which it would be a difficult thing to perform. Indeed, why should he give himself so much trouble to acquire glory, if mere speaking

would do it? It is very natural for a man, who flatters himself, to take the shortest way to accomplish his desires. I say, when a man flatters himself that it is a sure way; for one may easily be deceived in such hopes. Men, who love to flourish upon themselves, make no great progress in reputation; they make some noise in it by their discourses, but it is a noise which renders them troublesome, because it does but stun the ears of those that hear them. They are as importunate as they pretend to great matters; they would be spoken of, and in truth they are so; but then they are as much depressed by contempt, as they raise themselves by their rodomontades. The more they boast, the more every body is curious to observe all their steps; and it happens most times, that they fall very short of their bragging words. "A great merit is requir-
"ed to answer a great expectation; he that looks,
"frames a great idea; because it is easier for him
"to imagine great things, than for him that is
"looked upon to do them. It is the common fate
"of all things that are much cried up, never to at-
"tain to the degree of perfection, that was ex-
"pected; reality could never equal imagination;
"because it is as difficult to have all perfections,
"as it easy to have an idea of them." I will never boast myself; for I had rather others should add something to my reputation, than if I should give them occasion by my boasting to lessen it. It is my duty to do that which deserves to be esteemed; it is the duty of others to esteem what I do that deserves it; they will do it if they please, it is their business.

MAXIM II.

He that boasts of a good thing he has done, gives occasion to believe that he did it only to boast of it.

REFLECTION.—A JUDICIOUS silence about a good action, is like a shadow in painting, which sets off the lustre of it. Men love to make publick the merit of those who love to conceal it; the modesty of a man which moves him to hide his merit, is a motive which prompts others to discover it; they think themselves obliged to do him that justice which he refuses to himself; so that reputation fetches him out of the deepest part of his voluntary obscurity, to place him in the light, that men may pay him the honour which virtue always has a right to pretend to. The contrary happens to him who boasts himself; men being persuaded that he has done a good thing only to speak of it, will no more talk of it, than if he had not done it; or if they mention it, it is in order to approve that good thing, and to censure at the same time the author of it. Every body admired the brave action of N— when others spoke of it; every body despises it since he speaks too much of it: they do not call it an ill action, for they dare not; but he has given occasion to call it a vain action, and therefore they dare call it so. He spoke to get some glory by it, but he loses by speaking the glory which he would have preserved by his silence. Boasting men are as unacceptable, as those who have an ill smell.

MAXIM III.

The words of those who boast themselves to appear considerable men, are seldom attended with any action.

REFLECTION.—SOME, who pretend to be considerable men, have no other credit than to make people believe by their artifices that they can do a great deal for them; though they have so little power, they can do nothing for themselves. I look upon those men as I do upon those who boast of having some admirable secrets, and yet are always poor and miserable; that is, I do not mind them more than I do mountebanks, who amuse the people with their bold prattling, to get a great deal more from them than they can give them; they are like those who seek the philosopher's stone, and who promise a million of pistoles to get one. Nevertheless, they who pretend to be considerable men, are not always moved to it by a principle of interest; vanity is often the cause of it; it is a very tickling pleasure for a man of that character, when, at his coming out of his closet, he finds a great many courtiers in his antichamber, who, gaping after the favours of fortune, hope to obtain them by his credit. Though he can no more dispose of them for them than for himself, yet he entertains them in their hopes with the same assurance as if he was master of them. The hopes he gives them, make him to be respected, which he aims at; when these men come to be undeceived, he will deceive others in their turn. Though he knows that he does not deserve the

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honour that is done him, because he is not so eminent a man as people take him to be, yet he is not troubled for it; for he considers that those, to whom he makes his court, are not more worthy of honour than himself. One would think, that he is persuaded that the honours of this world are not solid and valuable enough to use any solid means in order to acquire them. A man who pretends to have a considerable power, would not find so many cullies, if they were not too greedy of the favours which they expect from him, or if they were not too much affected with mere appearances. He plays a game which deceives nobody but the most superficial men, who, for want of penetration, know not things as they are in themselves. Every thing that shines, dazzles them; every thing that affects them, hurries them away; and being thus dazzled and hurried, they suffer themselves to be led at a man's pleasure. This is so true, that there are some men, who, by much praising themselves, have at last obliged some other men to praise them likewise. As for me, I am so far from boasting of a power which I have not, that I find myself very much inclined not to speak of that which I have, that I may not be troubled with importunate men.

MAXIM IV.

The boasting man is commonly a deciding man.

REFLECTION.—THE same vanity which moves men to boast themselves, moves them likewise to be peremptory. They boast themselves, because they are willing to appear worthy of praise; and they fancy they should derogate from their pretensions, if they did not decide, without expecting any reply: but it does not frequently happen, that they are depressed by others, because they affect to raise themselves above them. A peremptory way shews too much authority and presumption, to please others. It is the part of an ignorant or of a young man to decide magisterially, and with precipitation. I am no very deciding man, because I do not flatter myself to have wit and penetration enough to distinguish readily what is true from what is false, and what is good from what is ill: I never repented yet of my want of forwardness in deciding.

The Ill Tongue.

MAXIM I.

Ill tongues are so common, that no man can flatter himself to be secure from their insults.

REFLECTION.—THERE is nothing dearer to men than a good reputation, seeing they often buy it at the expense of their lives and fortunes; nevertheless, there is nothing that is so often assaulted: the great and little ones, the rich and poor, young and old, good and wicked men, are all generally exposed to the piercing darts of detraction. "It "deforms every thing; it spares neither just men "nor sinners; it keeps a dreadful tribunal always "set up to judge the actions, and even the inten-"tions of men, searching their very hearts with "great presumption; it delights above all things "in defaming the best men, and by its envenomed "darts it brings innocence itself into suspicion, "and makes truth difficult to be known by those "who have been seduced or prepossessed by it." The malignity of detracting men is grown to such a height, that it poisons every thing; they pretend to shew an ill thing where there is none; and they will not acknowledge a good thing where it is to be found. For example, because there is generally a false devotion in the world, they can hardly believe that there are any true devout men; if a man, after many reflections upon his past life, leaves off gaming, and gives over the

pleasures of the world, to live a more regular life; if a young lady renounces luxury and vanity, to live according to the rules of piety and christian modesty, they inquire into the reasons of that change, but they always pitch upon the less charitable, to ascribe such a reformation to humour, caprice, levity, vanity, or to their ill circumstances. Men are as willing to detract their neighbours, as they are willing to speak, and when they speak, they are never better pleased, than when they begin to speak ill of them. If a conversation falls, detraction will keep it up; every body concurs in it; nay, those who profess a great regularity, will sometimes piously favour it, and make it so much the more cruel and dangerous, because it is strengthened with their suffrage and approbation. Such a conduct is as detestable, as it is contrary to humanity. Alas! are we made to destroy one another in such a manner? We shall find, if we mind it, that a detracting man is guilty of envy, hatred, injustice, malice, treachery and cruelty: but it seems that all men make a publick profession of those things. If I was to wish for authority, it would only be to silence detracting men; it would only be to make some laws against evil speaking, as severe as those which are enacted against murder and robberies. All that I can do now, when I happen to be with detracting men, is to supply my want of power, by expressing outwardly my aversion for such a thing; I shew a discontented face; I am silent; or if I speak, I do it only to justify, as far as charity requires it, those who are ill spoken of. Lastly, I use all the

skill I am capable of, to make the conversation fall upon another subject: I would do more, if I had a greater power.

MAXIM II.

If a detracting man does no harm to those whom he speaks ill of, it is only for want of an occasion.

REFLECTION.—BUT do not we prejudice a man when we speak ill of him? A detracting man wants no occasion to do a great deal of mischief; for detraction is always attended with great mischief, which is most times irreparable, because it is almost impossible he who did it should be able to destroy it, whatever retraction he may make of it. How can he recal and annihilate a word which has been spoken by so many men, and which has as much increased in malignity as it has been multiplied by an infinite number of repetitions? How can he take off the impression which such a repetition and malignity have made in an infinite number of men? How can he be heard by them all, that they may know that he has retracted what he had said. The more we reflect upon those difficulties, the more it will appear that evil speaking is a mischievous thing, because it will be found that it is impossible to make reparation for it.

MAXIM III.

A detracting man, who knows that he gives occasion to speak ill of him, thinks to justify himself by speaking ill of others.

REFLECTION.—IT is in vain for a detracting man to flatter himself with the hopes of such a justification; he must not expect to be justified by any one of those who hear him: They will think that the man ill spoken of is guilty; but they will never believe that he, who speaks ill of him, is innocent. Let the detracting man sincerely judge of it by himself, when he hears somebody speak ill of others. Will he excuse the faults he observes in him, in favour of his evil speaking? We might certainly be more reasonable in our actions, if we did penetrate into the inside of those who are witnesses of them. Such a penetration is not so difficult as it is thought to be; we need only suppose that we are in their case, and judge of their sentiments by ours; and then, when we come to speak ill of a man, we shall not think of hiding our faults by discovering his; seeing we know that we are so far from excusing the faults of those who speak ill of others in our presence, that we will not so much as excuse their evil speaking, though we be never so well pleased to hear them. This precept, which is so natural, *to do by others as we would be done by*, forces us, as it were, to do that justice to others, and forces others to do the like to us. If humanity is not powerful enough to make us hate evil speaking, let self-love

at least do it; let us judge of the sensibility of those, whom we wound in the most sensible part, by our own; and knowing how grievous it is to be ill spoken of, let us learn to forbear speaking ill of others.

The Swearer.

MAXIM I.

You ought to rely more upon the virtue and probity of a man, than upon his oaths.

REFLECTION.—HE, who for want of equity and uprightness, does not scruple to betray truth, will no less betray it after an oath than if he had not sworn at all. A wicked man, having given up his soul to injustice, will easily make an outward show of probity; he is very willing to swear at any time, because his oaths are so many snares which he lays to honest men, that he may the better deceive them. Why should I require an oath of a man of honour? can I have a better surety for the truth of what he says, than his probity? Being so true to his duty, would he be wanting to do it without an oath? Why should I require an oath from an ill man? Have I any reason to believe that he will be truer to his word, than to his duty?

MAXIM II.

Use no oaths; but keep your word without swearing.

REFLECTION.—THIS is what the Scythians said to Alexander the Great. We learn from that maxim, *that we should never swear, but when we are necessarily obliged to it.*—When I hear any body swear without any necessity, I am apt to believe that he does it because his conscience tells him, that he does not deserve to be believed upon his mere word. I am never imposed upon by swearing men; I look upon them as men, who, having got the habit of swearing, do not consider the ill consequences of it, or care so little for it, that it is indifferent to them whether they be sincere in their oaths, or not; for habits are commonly attended with indifferency and want of attention. Do not we see some men, who, having got such a habit, never speak without swearing, and without mixing the most sacred things with their oaths; who swear out of anger and debauchery, to pass away the time, without any reason, without any attention, aim, or design in it, and without being able to shew what advantage they get by it? Their oaths serve them instead of transitions, in their discourses; to swear and speak is the same thing to them; but it is not so with those that hear them; for if they were contented to speak without swearing, they would not be so much abhorred by wise men. Their oaths stain the good things they say, and raise the indignation of honest men against them. I take every swearer to be a

passionate, or an inconsiderate, or a loose man, or one, whose education has been very much neglected; every one of those things is odious to an honest man.

The Promiser.

MAXIM I.

Never promise any thing without these two provisos, If I can; if it be not against my duty.

REFLECTION—THERE is nothing more lovely, than to love to oblige others; nevertheless, it is the duty of a prudent and discreet man not to be so far overcome by his obliging humour, as to promise any thing that is desired of him, without considering whether he can or ought to grant it. Too great a desire of being kind to others, or too great a timidity, which does not permit to refuse any thing, may make a man excessive in his promises, which will render his zeal indiscreet and his timidity shameful. If my promises are not suited to my power, I shall expose myself to the contempt of men; because my weakness will be better known to them. If I promise out of bashfulness what I cannot perform, I shall blush much more, when it will appear that I am not in a capacity of performing what I have promised. If my duty be not the rule of my promises, I shall

do myself as much prejudice, by reason of the ill opinion which others will entertain of me, as I have been willing to oblige them by my promises to them. I ought not to be ashamed to refuse to do an unjust thing; he, who requires it from me, should rather be ashamed; the only thing that should make me ashamed, is, that perhaps I have given occasion to think that I was unreasonable enough to make such a promise, and to perform it. I do inviolably keep my word, when I can, when I think I have not given it without a cause; when I have reason to believe, that if I keep it I shall not wrong the person to whom I gave it, and that it will not be more prejudicial to me than beneficial to him. The performance of one's promise may be attended with an inconveniency, which could not be foreseen; and it is not likely that he, who made such a promise, was willing to suffer by it. If I do not promise so much as I am desired, I am willing to do more than is expected from me. For I think our deeds should always exceed our promises.

MAXIM II.

He, who is always ready to promise, will not be so ready to perform what he has promised.

REFLECTION.—BECAUSE such promises are made by men, who do not consider whether they can or ought to perform them; or they are made so rashly, that they soon slip out of their memo-

ry. A man who does not give his word too hastily will not break it rashly. I had rather promise less than I am required, than do less than I have promised. I could willingly use the words of Montaigne. "I am very nice in the perform-"ance of my promises, even to a scruple; and I "am willing to make them at all times uncertain "and conditional; the rule I have prescribed to "myself makes me uneasy: I had rather be bound "by a notary, and all other such formalities, than "by my word; so scrupulous and exact I am in "the performance of it." They, who think it their duty to perform exactly what they have promised, will not be rash and forward in their promises.

MAXIM III.

Men do often promise according to their hopes, and keep their promises according to their fear.

REFLECTION.—I DO not at all rely upon the promise of a man, who is moved to make it merely by his hopes, not doubting, that if he does not obtain what he hopes for, he will not grant me what he has promised. The same hopes which may deceive the promiser, will not fail to deceive the person to whom he made a promise. I make the same judgment of a man, who keeps his word according to his fear; for his fear being over, his promise subsists no longer. I take therefore all those promises to be very conditional; and conse-

quently I rely upon them no farther than I think the conditions will be effected; I ground my confidence upon the motive of the promise.

MAXIM IV.

A man gets more by promising, than by performing what he has promised.

REFLECTION.—AND therefore they, who never do a good office, but for their own interest, will make a man stay a long time for it, before they grant it; they know that men have as great an indifferency for what they have got, as they shewed themselves eager to get it; and consequently that their constant services to those, of whom they hope to receive a favour, will cease as soon as that favour is no longer hoped for. Wherefore a judicious and penetrating man, who knows how to value things according to their worth, does not much rely upon such services; it is in vain to propose them to him as a thing on which he may build some projects, he does not think it to be solid enough to lay any lasting foundations upon it. I am not surprised that those promises should have an effect contrary to that, which it seems the performance of them should have produced; it is a mutual interested commerce, to which a man, to whom a promise is made, fancies to have as much right, as the promiser. That interest spoils the noblest virtues, and makes us neglect the practice

of them. Were it not for it, men would be generous in their promises, and would feel the effects of them, and express their gratitude for them.

The Novelist.

MAXIM I.

When a profest novelist speaks the truth, it is a mere chance.

REFLECTION.—A PREPOSSEST novelist says nothing but what agrees with his prejudices; it is only by chance that he believes or speaks the truth; for what he believes and says is not always false; seeing the party he favours may be also favoured by fortune, and so afford him a happy success, which shall be the matter of his belief and discourse. But a novelist is not always prejudiced in favour of such and such a party, but only in favour of that which furnishes him with all his news: those news are always infallible, if we may believe him, and he maintains them with the same assurance, as if he had been the chief actor of the events which have been told him. The reason of his infatuation is, that he is unwilling to be thought so credulous, as to suffer himself to be deceived. In the mean time, the prepossest novelist prepossesses many others; which occasions

abundance of news that are told for certain; though the only proof they have of their certainty is, that they have read or heard them.

MAXIM II.

Though a novelist is no farther concerned in great events than to relate them, yet he thinks himself concerned in the execution of them.

REFLECTION.—WHICH is the reason why he takes so great a delight in telling news, and maintains them with obstinacy. "That man who "would be afraid of the least danger, longs to "know the end of that war, and is more concern-"ed for it, than the soldiers who expose their lives "in it." One would think, by his way of speaking, that he gives a faithful account of his designs, to make us approve the justice thereof; of his steps, to make us esteem his prudence; and of his actions, to make us admire his courage. But if, notwithstanding his great zeal, he finds himself reduced to such an extremity as not to be able to say any thing that deserves to be admired, esteemed, or applauded, he places himself, by an effect of his imagination, in the room of the generals, and ministers, and even of the prince himself, to justify by his reasonings, base actions, imprudent steps, and unjust designs; and, at last, if he approves of them, he concludes that it was impossible to do better, because he thinks every thing is right. If he does not approve of them, he flatters

himself, that if he had been one of the council, things might have had a better success, because he would have given a different advice. All those things are the common effects of prejudices, or of a speculation that is attended with no practice.

MAXIM III.

The profest novelist is equally pleased with good and ill news.

REFLECTION.—A PROFEST novelist is like a merchant, who, for fear of losing his trade and credit, had rather sell bad commodities than none at all; a novelist, without news, would be reduced to a very melancholy and languishing life; for he has no other employment. To hear and tell news is his trade, his profession, his office, his dignity; and as we see every day, that every body discharges the duties of his place, though they make some people uneasy; so the novelist tells his news, without much caring for the trouble they may give others. The grief which commonly attends ill news, makes me unwilling to hear, or publish them; they are but too soon known; we need not be impatient to hear them; every day we are ignorant of them is a happy day for us.

MAXIM IV.

Whilst a novelist regulates in his fancy the affairs of the state, he commonly orders his own very ill.

REFLECTION.—HE is like a woman, who makes it her business to read romances; her mind being taken up with stately and magnificent palaces, with wonderful intrigues and adventures, with amorous princes, who amuse her very agreeably with their faithfulness, complaisance and submission to those whom they love; she cannot endure the plainness of her house, take a particular view of the affairs of her family, and see with any pleasure a husband, who, far from speaking like a prince passionately in love with her, does often express some contempt for her, at least, a great deal of indifferency, or at most, a friendship regulated by reason, and kept up by use; in short, love is the only thing that runs in her head. Such is the character of our novelist; whilst his mind runs over states, kingdoms, and empires; whilst he reasons about embassies, negociations, treaties, and other such political matters; whilst he fancies that he is conversing with generals, ministers and princes; how can he take any delight in confining himself to his house, in stooping to the little concerns of his family, in conversing with his wife and children, and in thinking of a better settlement? He makes the fortune of the greatest states his own; he equally shares with princes and emperors in their calamities and happiness, he spends what he has, for such an imaginary sharing, and

lives a most miserable life in his own country, to keep correspondence in other countries, that he may be informed of what passes there.

The Tale Bearer.

MAXIM I.

A tale bearer is often a babbler or a malicious man.

REFLECTION.—IF we consider the hatred which is occasioned by reports, the quarrels which they create, and the divisions which they foment, we shall find that they who make them, are moved to it by a great itching of speaking, or by an extreme desire of prejudicing others. Indeed one must needs be very fond of speaking, to meddle with the affairs of other men in such a manner, without any necessity, authority, and order for it; or delight very much in disorder, to be so willingly the occasion of it. Such a thing seems to me to be so unworthy of an honest man, that I have much ado to report some obliging things, lest some people should suspect that I may as well report some that are disadvantageous. A man may prejudice his own affair by being too zealous for those of other men; though he be a discreet person, yet he may be accounted a great talker by those whom it concerns not to hear them; and he may say several things which, though true, will

be more unacceptable than lies. However, a man must not refuse to speak when he thinks that justice requires it; but let him do it in such a manner that if there is any ill thing in it, it may be ascribed only to the ill disposition of the hearer, and not to the ingenuity of the speaker.

MAXIM II.

Do not give free access to a tale bearer.

REFLECTION.—IF you are apt to hearken to reports, you will be at the discretion of the most wicked men, who will be glad to disquiet your mind; you will hinder your reconciliation with your enemies; (for they who hearken to reports, swell them, if they be never so little prejudiced against those that are spoken of) nay, you will run the danger of falling out with your friends, though you know, by a long experience, that their fidelity has always been sincere and inviolable. Lastly, by much hearkening to reports, you may contract the same ill habit. I have found out a way to get rid of delators, which has proved very successful to me; when I am obliged to hear them, I intimate to them, that I will not believe what they say, unless they get it confirmed to me by those who are concerned in it. It is a thing they will never submit to; and therefore I will not believe them.

MAXIM III.

You ought to be less inclined to believe a report than to hear it.

REFLECTION.—THE consequences of a report are only dangerous, because it is credited; if a man could hear a report without believing it, it would be only an amusement, which would not disquiet him in the least. In order to hear reports with indifferency, and to avoid being surprised by the artifices, or simplicity of those who make them, I take care to examine their manners, their inclinations, and their genius, to know whether they design to prejudice me out of malice; whether it be their interest to make me believe such a thing; whether they be actuated by revenge; whether they magnify what they say, to make it more considerable, lest they should be thought to amuse themselves about little and trifling things; whether jealousy, envy, or some other ill principle makes them put an ill construction upon things. Lastly, whether for want of knowledge and penetration, they take up indifferently every thing they hear, and confound it without any ill design. But because it is a very difficult thing to make such an examination, I never make an absolute judgment about reports. I take all those measures and precautions, especially with respect to my friends. Certainly it would be a very unreasonable thing for me to condemn so rashly a friend, who never gave me occasion to complain of him. I am told a tale which might induce me

to hate my friend, if I did not use such precautions as friendship, and even humanity requires of me: I ought therefore to use such precautions. I would not judge a cause about a small sum of money without having unexceptionable witnesses; nay, I would not believe those witnesses, unless they had been sworn according to the forms of law; I would give a sufficient time to the parties concerned to prepare things for a hearing, lest I should give a wrong judgment; but should I be so hard, so unjust, and so unreasonable, as to condemn my friend upon the first report, without suspending my judgment for some time, until I have heard him? Certainly I should be more furious and passionate than equitable and judicious. How many men might we acquit, if we were more reasonable than passionate?

The Adviser.

MAXIM I.

The best advice is that which is given seasonably.

REFLECTION.—TO advise a man whilst he is transported by the violence and impetuosity of his passion; to advise a man, who, being full of business, cannot take time enough to hear you, with as serious an attention as the subject requires; to advise a man about a project, which he cannot

break without doing himself more prejudice than the advice will do him good; to advise a man in the presence of those who love to find fault with his conduct, whom he hates, or who have already given him the same advice, which he would not follow; to advise a man that is jealous of you, and hates you, when you know by experience that he has an ill opinion of you, and despises you; to advise a man in all such and the like cases, is a rash and imprudent thing, because it is done very unseasonably. Never give any advice but when you hope that it will be followed; and therefore never give it but in such circumstances as will not hinder the execution of it. Every thing that is unseasonable cannot please, and consequently is always very unacceptable, and will be altogether rejected.

MAXIM II.

The advice which seems to be given with the greatest sincerity, and is consequently the most acceptable, is that which a man seems to give without any self interest.

REFLECTION.—WHEN a man advises another without any self interest, he does it without designing to flatter his vanity, to satisfy self love, and to get something by it; he does it when he is required to do it, when he thinks a man desires it, and that it will be acceptable to him; he does it without pretending to force his liberty, and to impose upon him the necessity of following his advice without pretending to make a law which

ought not to be violated. Lastly, to advise a man, is to give him some instructions which he may make use of for his good. This is what they, who desire to be advised, require of those who advise them. If any body asks my advice, or, if I think myself indispensably obliged to advise him, without being required to do it, I do it at last, I do not pretend to make a law of it; I willingly permit every body to examine, reject, or follow my advice. I do not ascribe to myself an infallible right, nor an absolute authority; I advise, I do not command; I advise others with great sincerity, and, as I think, without pretending that nobody can think better than myself. It is the duty of a wise man to hear all the advices that are given him; but a wise man ought not always to follow them; and therefore I do not take it ill if any body refuses to follow mine. I am not fond of advising others, because I know that they are so far from making use of the advices which they do not desire, that they seldom follow those which they desire. The only thing that I aim at is, to make those whom I advise better men, and more content, and not to prove to them that I am a better man, and more content than they. When I give some instructions to others, I endeavour to strengthen myself in the practice of those which I give to myself, remembering this maxim, that when a man advises others to practise virtue, it is a new reason for him to practise it. I speak to put men in action, and not merely to speak; this is the only spirit of interest, which animates my advices. I am not very hasty in advising any body that de-

sires it; I never do it without a previous careful examination, and a serious attention. A man who is very ready to give advice, shews thereby that he does not see very far, and that he is soon resolved, because he is not able to distinguish all the different faces of an affair. He that will give good advice, ought to know thoroughly the thing in question, and the strength of the person who undertakes it. If I think myself indispensably obliged to advise a greater man than myself, I do not seem to advise him, but only to put him in mind of what he had forgot; being persuaded that whoever pretends to know more than great men, will be very unacceptable to them; and that many of them are never willing to ask advice, but when they are resolved to do a man some mischief, and to put an ill design in execution, to the end, that the adviser may draw upon himself the hatred of those that are discontented.

MAXIM III.

A man ought to be wise, or if he is not, he ought to be advised by those who are so.

REFLECTION.—LET us do ourselves justice, and not think ourselves to be so wise, as to presume that we want the help of nobody for the conduct of our lives. Whatever capacity we may pretend to, (a capacity which will appear to us to be very inconsiderable, if we reflect upon so many false steps we have made) let us confess, as we know by our own experience, that it is very

often impossible for us to be clear sighted, because we are blinded by our passions; or to follow the strait way, because they put us out of it; or to reason well, because they make us very unreasonable; and therefore why should we neglect the advices of those, who being not possest with the same unruly passions, can make a better use of their knowledge and capacity? If we are truly desirous of perfection, it matters not whether we attain to it by our help, or by the help of others, provided we attain to it. But are we really desirous of perfection? We may very well doubt of it, if we consider those who ask advice, and those who give it. In effect, let us examine a man who is going to be advised, and another who prepares himself to advise him; the first appears with so respectful a deference, that one would think he will approve every thing that shall be told him; he says, that he comes in order to receive the instructions he wants for his conduct, not thinking himself capable to instruct himself; but if one could dive into his thoughts, it would be found that he comes with no other design but to get his sentiments approved, and to make, in some measure, the man whom he consults answerable for the event. The second, that is, the advising man, pays at first, the confidence his friend places in him, with several marks of an eager, sincere and uninterested zeal; but his zeal is excited by something else, seeing his own interest is the rule of his advices, and at last, when the affair in question has been examined several times, and after much discourse, he thinks that the most acceptable advice he can give the

man who seems to desire it, is to advise him to do what he pleases. This is the common fate of advices; they are desired and given, but they are ill received, and consequently rejected. I endeavour to make an exception to that rule, which is but too general. I do sincerely desire to be advised; I hear attentively, and I receive with civility and thankfulness the advices that are given me, I examine them without any prejudices, and I think it my duty to follow them, if after all those precautions, I am persuaded that they are advantageous to me.

The Reprover.

MAXIM I.

We ought to reprimand weak men with condescension, tractable men with simplicity, refractory men with authority, and all of them with prudence and circumspection.

REFLECTION.—THE only thing we ought to aim at in our reprimands, is to render men better, and more reasonable than they are. In order thereunto, we must be free from passions, and hearken only to reason; it is only by consulting reason, that we can make other men reasonable. They who are reprimanded are but too much inclined to oppose the advices we give them; there-

fore we must take care not to confirm them in their obstinacy, by any motives and steps, which may appear to them contrary to sincerity and uprightness. We ought to have some regard to their weakness and prejudices, and make a good use of their attention, and of the confidence which they repose in us. When we put them in mind of their duty, let us do it in such a manner, that if they are not the better for it, it be rather their fault than ours. Whilst we go about to reform them, we must not give them occasion to find fault with our way of doing it. In order to avoid such an inconveniency, I use the following precautions in all my reprimands.

1. I consider whether it be my duty to reprove a man who deserves it; and whether I shall work more upon him than others, to whom I might leave the care of doing it.

2. I endeavour as much as I can, to say or do nothing that may spoil the advices I give him. How could he be disposed to believe what I tell him, if he saw that I do what he does?

3. I censure others in the same manner as I censure myself, that is, by being as tender of their reputation as I am of mine. N— has been so often censured in publick by his superior, that he is now no more ashamed of a reprimand; so true it is, that a censure will do more harm than good, unless it be managed with great prudence.

4. N— is very willing to hear my censures, because he knows that I praise him, when he deserves it. He is persuaded, that seeing I praise him willingly, I never blame him but with reluc-

tancy, and that I am more desirous to reform him than to reprove him.

5. Some few praises before a reprimand, will wonderfully insinuate it into one's mind. When I say to N— that he is naturally a sincere, upright man, that I know it; and when I reprove him afterwards, and seem to lay the fault upon his ignorance, or upon some ill examples, he appears to me to approve what I say, and to be willing to do what I require of him. When I put a man in mind of the good actions he has done, I inspire him with a greater aversion to those for which I reprove him.

6. I avoid in all my reprimands every thing that looks like jesting and railing; such insults will only make a man refractory.

7. I had rather reprove my friends in prosperity than in adversity; they stand more in need of it then; affliction is commonly attended with correction; a reprimand seems to be cruel to those, who lie under great affliction.

8. To reprimand a man at table, is a very improper and unseasonable thing; such reprimands have an air of severity, which does not become those, who meet for their diversion.

9. If I see my friend justly censured, but publickly, I blame such a publick reprimand, and yet I reprove him in private.

10. I take great care not to reprove a husband before his wife, a wife before her husband, a father before his children, and a master before his servants; one may easily perceive the reason of it.

11. I seldom reprove any body for some small faults, that I may reprove him more powerfully for some considerable faults.

12. I use as much moderation and gentleness as I can, when I reprove a man for some faults which he has committed; but I am earnest, hot and inexorable, when I design to hinder him from committing a fault, which I know he has a mind to commit.

13. Too great a severity in our reproofs, will often produce a pernicious effect; it frightens so much those, who deserve to be reproved for some faults which they have committed, that they use all the art they are capable of to conceal them, and so they make them incurable. The greatest punishment I could inflict upon N— was to appear melancholy before him, by reason of a fault which I knew he had committed. My silence, on such an occasion, was as powerful as a severe reprimand.

14. I take care, when I reprove any body, to distinguish well the faults which proceed from idleness, ignorance, want of attention, and malice. Such a distinction is necessary to make a good reprimand.

MAXIM II.

They, who deserve most to be praised, will bear a reprimand with more patience.

REFLECTION.—I KNOW no men more tractable, when they are reproved, than those who

deserve more to be praised; they love perfection; and therefore they are worthy of praise. A reproof affords them the means of acquiring what they love; and therefore they do not take it ill to be reproved.

1. It is not enough for me to know my faults, I will not excuse any of them. No man can pretend to attain to perfection when he excuses some faults which keep him from it. If I did excuse my faults, I would not forgive those, who reprove me for them.

2. I do ingenuously confess that I am in the wrong, when I know my faults; I easily know them, because I believe I may commit them. He, who has been so bold as to do an ill action, ought to be patient enough, to suffer himself to be reproved for it.

3. S— told me that I am guilty of a fault; I believe more of it than he tells me; for I have learned by experience, that they who give such admonitions have commonly some regard to the niceness and self-love of those whom they admonish.

4. I had rather avoid those who flatter me, than those who reprove me; because the former make me quite another man than I am; whereas the latter help me to know myself, and consequently to be such as I desire to be. He, that loves to be reproved, will in time deserve to be praised; and the more we shun a praising flatterer, the less we avoid a reproving friend.

5. I give the liberty to reprove me for my faults, because I easily yield to those, who re-

prove me: "Loving to gratify and keep up the "liberty of admonishing me, by my facility of "yielding." I reprove and condemn myself so often, that I do not take it ill to be reproved and condemned by others.

The Instructer.

MAXIM I.

You ought to be well instructed, before you instruct others.

REFLECTION.—TO instruct a man, is to teach him what he does not know; one ought therefore to be well instructed in what he is ignorant of. The ignorance, which we suppose in the man who is instructed, requires a great many talents to instruct him well; for one must, if I may say so, molify his mind, if it be hard, to make impression upon it; one must enlarge it, if it be narrow; make it tractable, if it be not pliant; clear it, if it be obscure; and attentive, if it be wandering; all those things are necessary, to give him some new notions to supply his expressions, to remove his objections, and to resolve his doubts; lastly, one must have a plentiful stock of all sorts of necessary knowledge, to produce those effects in him, and not put off acquiring of it, till we know that he stands in need of it. The reason why so few men are well instructed, is, because few of those, who

instruct them, use such precautions: being contented to satisfy their vanity or interest, without much caring whether those, who are under their conduct, will be benefited by it. How many men have I seen, who have confirmed the common saying, *That many people will meddle with things which they do not understand.*

MAXIM II.

In order to dispose men to receive instruction, we must win their affection, before we require of them that they should perform their duty.

REFLECTION.—BECAUSE, when men are won, they are more inclined to practise what is required of them; they contribute as much to their own instruction by their attention, patience, assiduity and eagerness, as those who instruct them; for the right way to do a thing well is to do it willingly. When a master, or a superior is well beloved, he is always willingly heard, and willingly obeyed; the pleasure of seeing and hearing him, sweetens the bitterness of his instructions, and facilitates the exercise thereof; the esteem and affection which men have for him, makes them love and esteem every thing he says. Because he has won them, he disposes of them at his pleasure; his authority appears to them so sweet, that they will never oppose it; the obedience which they pay to him, is rather an effect of their inclination, than of a slavish fear of his

power; because they esteem and love him, every thing that comes from him appears to them lovely and worthy of esteem. But what must one do, to succeed in his instructions? I shall set down what I have done, and what I do, when I think myself obliged to instruct any body; as I have been satisfied with my conduct, so the desire I have to be serviceable to those, who shall read this book, moves me to communicate it to them; in hopes, that if it be not a perfect instruction for them, it will become more perfect, because they will perhaps find out something better.

1. I look upon the instruction which I give, as a duty which I think myself obliged to discharge; and therefore I discharge it heartily, sincerely, and with a good will; so that the person whom I instruct, perceiving my zeal, is animated to answer it with the same ardour, and with so much the greater eagerness, because he ought to know, that it is more his interest to follow my instruction, that it is mine to instruct him. There is nothing, in my opinion, that will make a greater impression upon men, and move them more powerfully to perform their duty, than to shew them, by a sincere indifferency for one's self, that one requires it of them, only for their own interest.

2. I take great care to know well the genius, inclinations, humours, and prevailing passions of those, whom it is my duty to instruct. It is so necessary to know the character of those who are instructed by us, that our instructions will often prove ineffectual, for want of such a knowledge; for if we do not know well the character of a man,

we do not know how to conform ourselves to his way, how to accommodate ourselves to his capacity, how to require nothing from him but what he can do, and how to put him in the way of doing it: instead of prevailing with him, we disgust, and discourage him; and he makes a resistance, which we must continually oppose, and which proves at last insurmountable. If you go too fast with a slow man, you leave him a great way behind you; if you go slowly with a quick man, he spends part of the time in thinking of quite another thing than what you tell him. If you deal haughtily with a proud man, he thinks only of raising himself against you by his disobedience, because you seem to be willing to depress him by your haughty manners. Too much fear will trouble the mind of a timorous man. You will never prevail upon an opiniater, if you affect to contradict him at all times. You will continually afflict a cheerful man, if you do not leave off your grave, serious and melancholy tone. You will make a melancholy man mad, if you use him always with a sad severity. We ought therefore to know well a man whom we instruct, that we may not instruct him in vain; but in order to know him well, let him have the liberty from time to time, (without perceiving your design) to shew himself as he is; that he may appear without disguise and dissimulation, and that you may judge by what he does then, of what he is capable to do.

3. It is also necessary, in order to win men, so as to move them powerfully to discharge their duty; it is, I say, necessary to behave ourselves in such

a manner, that they may not observe any thing in us, which may give them occasion to doubt of the necessity of performing those duties; they will never be convinced of that necessity, unless it appears to them, that we are perfectly convinced of it; and therefore the practice must not contradict the theory. Our actions must not be inconsistent with our words; we must not be angry, when we go about to prove that men ought not to be overcome by anger. It is in vain for us to use such arguments as seem to be unanswerable; if our conduct be contrary to them, it will work more powerfully upon others, than all our arguments. I think one might very well tell me in such a case; "What! "do you pretend that I should believe you, "when you advise me to practise virtue; and it "appears to me that you yourself do not believe "what you say? How can I be persuaded that "you believe what you say, seeing your actions "prove that you believe the contrary? Do you "design to increase the merit of my belief by a "conduct contrary to your maxims?" But when instructions and advices are attended and strengthened with actions, they leave no room for unbelief, but they force men, if I may say so, to approve them; or if they make any opposition to them, it is because the violent and tumultuous motions, which are excited by their passions, hinder them from being persuaded by reason. We must then be patient, till they recover their tranquillity, that their minds may freely exercise their functions.

4. They who are instructed, will make a more solid and lasting progress, if they are governed by

reason, than if they are discouraged by fear. "Young boys are properly kept in a prison; (says "Montaigne, speaking of the severity wherewith "some masters use children) if you come there "upon the point of their office, you shall hear "nothing but the cries of children, who are lashed, "and of masters, who are mad with anger. How "can it be expected that those poor fearful souls "should be encouraged to mind their book, with "dreadful looks, and hands armed with whips?" If they are only governed by fear, they will follow ill courses, as soon as their fear is over; and it is certain that it will be over in a little time. But if they are sober, because they are convinced by reason, that they ought to be so; and if out of love for reason, they submit to the instructions that are given them, without being forced to it by the authority of their masters, one may reasonably hope that they will observe the same instructions better, than if fear and terror had been the only motive of their obedience.—"Never put on, "without a great necessity for it, a severe and "imperious countenance, which makes children "tremble; it is often a piece of affectation and "pedantry in their governours; for children are "commonly but too timorous and bashful; it would "discourage them and lessen their confidence, "without which no advantage can be expected "from their education. Endeavour to get their "love; let them be free with you, and not at all "afraid to let you see their faults. That you "may succeed in it, be indulgent to those, who do "not dissemble before you; do not seem to won-

"der at or be angry with their bad inclinations; "on the contrary, bear with their weakness; there "will arise sometimes an inconveniency from it, "they will be less kept in awe; but, in the main, "confidence and sincerity are more useful to them, "than a rigorous authority."

5. When I design to instruct a man, I endeavour beforehand to make him desirous of my instructions, that he may be the better for them; in order to it, I avoid those strained expressions of repularito, which discourage men, and will only render virtue odious, and make one believe that it is impossible to practise it. We discourage men, when we undertake to inspire them with love for virtue, and when at the same time we make the way to it too difficult. "Some men teach "wisdom so awkwardly, that they make one be- "lieve it is a thing which is learned with great "difficulty, and is of no great use to those who "have learned it."

6. It is also necessary, in order to make a man willing to hear the advices that are given him, to shew him the advantages that will accrue to him by it; that he may be encouraged to overcome the difficulties of study. We must always aim at something in all our actions; without such a precaution, we do not know whither we are going; we do not love to make any steps that are of no use to us.

7. I observe further, that clearness, rules and order, ought not to be neglected by those, who instruct others; if they do sincerely desire that their instructions may be useful to them. Let us

suppose at all times, (and perhaps we shall never be mistaken) that those who stand in need of our instructions, want attention, judgment or inclination; that we may excite their attention by clearness, supply the weakness of their judgment by rules, and raise their inclination by order. He who finds no obscurity in what he must learn, will not refuse to apply himself to it; because such an application will not tire him much. He, who is directed by rules, will follow the way he is put in, with less danger of losing it, though his knowledge be never so little; because the way is more straight. He, who follows a certain order, makes every step without pains; because he uses himself to it insensibly; order begets a certain habit, which renders assiduity less laborious. To conclude, let us be persuaded, that men are willing to practise what they have willingly heard.

MAXIM III.

When you instruct others, be always so much master of yourself, as to give no hold to impatience.

REFLECTION.—THERE are commonly in those, who are instructed, so many difficulties to be surmounted, so many contradictions to be overcome, and so many ill dispositions to be rooted out, that if a man be not well armed with patience, he will be apt to fall into a passion, which, depriving him of the use of reason, will at the same time disable him from making others reasonable.

We have already said, that when we instruct any body, we must endeavour to win him, to accommodate ourselves to his capacity, to have some regard to his disposition, to give him good example, to observe some rules, to follow a certain order, and to say or do nothing that may discourage him; all those precautions are certainly inconsistent with the impetuous and unruly motions of impatience. The remonstrances, that are made in the midst of so much trouble and confusion, are looked upon as so many injuries, as so many resentments, and as so many productions, which seem rather to proceed from a furious and malicious passion, than from a sedate and kind reason. "For "example; the reason why children are seldom "better for the remonstrances that are made to "them, is, because they perceive that their masters "will rather chide them, because they find their "faults troublesome, than because they are dan"gerous, and that they are reproved rather out of "passion, than out of justice." But patience enables us to be as much masters of other men as we are of ourselves. A man who has the command of himself holds, if I may say so, all his talents in his hands, to dispose of them at his pleasure, with a wise and prudent discretion, as occasion and necessity require.

MAXIM IV.

Whilst you imprint the knowledge of justice in the minds of those whom you instruct, take care to form in them the habit of that virtue.

REFLECTION.—IT is a good thing to give some judicious rules to those whom we instruct, to fill their minds with wise maxims, to strengthen them with solid principles, to teach them their duty, and convince them of the obligation that lies upon them to discharge it; but it is better still to make them practise all those instructions; which is a thing very seldom observed. Montaigne speaks of this negligence in a very pleasing manner. "I "would have," says he, "Palues or Pompey, those "two fine dancers of our time, teach us to caper, "only by seeing them do so, and without stirring "from our places; as these men will inform "our understandings without moving them; or I "would have a man teach us how to manage a "horse, a pike, a lute, or the voice, without exer- "cising us in those things; as these men will "teach us to judge and speak well, without exer- "cising us in judging and speaking. Did ever "any master ask his disciple what he thinks of "rhetorick and grammar, and of such and such "sayings of Cicero? They clap them on our "memory as so many oracles. They are contin- "ually bawling in our ears, as if they were pour- "ing into a funnel; and our task is only to repeat "what we have been told. I would have a master "alter his method in this point; and I wish that

"from the very beginning, he would use a boy, "committed to his care, to relish things, and to "choose and discern them of himself, sometimes "opening the way to him, and sometimes letting "him open it. I would not have him speak "alone; I would have him hear his disciple speak "in his turn. Let him trot before him, that he "may judge of his going, and how far he ought to "accommodate himself to his capacity; we spoil "all for want of such a method." Without practice, duties will be neglected, principles will prove ineffectual, maxims will be forgotten, and a man will wander, though he has learned the best rules that he can make use of, for his conduct. It is not enough to inform his mind, we must also put him in the way of practising what he has learned, that we may know whether he can make a good use of it; and we must beget in him a habit of practice, which ought to be the chief aim of all his speculations and of all his studies. Memory is looked upon as a magazine, which is stored with several sorts of things; but all those things are no farther useful, than they serve in a judicious commerce. "To know "a thing by heart, is not true knowledge, ft is "only keeping what has been committed to mem-"ory; he that knows a thing well, can dispose of "it, without looking upon the pattern, without "casting his eyes upon his book. A mere book-"ish learning is not sufficient; let it serve as an "ornament, but not as a foundation; let a man "learn some histories, but let him rather learn "how to udge of them." Teach the person, com-

mitted to your care, how he ought to reason; but make him reason at the same time; acquaint him with all the several opinions of men, about the subject you treat of, but ask him his own opinion. "We must," says Charron, "awaken them by "asking them several questions, and desire them "to give their opinion first, and even allow them "the liberty to make several inquiries, and to "open the way, whenever they have a mind to "it. If you speak always to them, without hear-"ing them speak in their turn, it will be almost "to no purpose; a boy will never be the better "for it, because he thinks that he has no share in "it, he only hears what you say, and yet but "coldly; he is not fond of it, as when he puts in "for one; nor is it enough to ask their opinion, "for they must always give a reason for it; that "they may not speak perfunctorily, but be careful "and attentive to what they say; and in order "to encourage them, you must not slight what "they say. Whenever they mention any thing "that is to be found in books, as in Cicero and "Aristotle, they must not only mention it, but "also judge of it; and therefore let him turn "it several ways, and apply it to several sub-"jects. It is not enough to relate as a history, "that Cato killed himself at Utica, for fear of "falling into the hands of Cæsar; and that "Brutus and Cassius were the authors of Cæsar's "death; but I would have him try them, and "judge whether they did well in that; whether "they deserved well of the publick or not; whe-"ther they went about it with prudence, justice

"and valour; and wherein they did well or ill; "lastly, you must require of him that he should "speak pertinently, truly and methodically in all "his discourses, questions and answers. You "must not dissemble with him in any one of these "things, but press him hard, and keep him close "to it." Shew him what equity, prudence and wisdom are; but engage him how to do some actions whereby he may prove that he is wise, prudent and equitable; he must not only learn how to speak, but also speak; and he must not only speak, but also do. "He, who puts his lesson in "practice, has made a greater progress, than he "who can only say it; if you see him, you hear "him; he will not so much say his lesson, as do "it, he will repeat it in his actions."

The reason why there are so few learned men, is, because most of them are contented to learn what others have said, without saying any thing of their own; they follow the opinions that are commonly received, without giving their own opinion. Whatever reasonings they may make, they do not reason at all, because others reason for them; their memory is very active, but their judgment is so idle, that it will be always barren, for they never took care to cultivate it. Because all their study consists in repetitions, every thing that appears new to them alarms them, and if it does not raise their indignation, it will at least excite their contempt; their decisions consist only in approving what has been decided by others; and they fancy that the best reasons they can allege, are those which they have learned. The

same indifferency for the practice, is also the reason why there are so few truly wise men. For most of them, having learned only to discourse well of wisdom, have altogether neglected the exercise of it. They do indeed perfectly know the definitions of the most excellent virtues, the worth of the finest maxims, the advantage that may be reaped from them, and how they may be practised; but they have made it so long and so serious a study to discourse well of them, that they have not given themselves the time, nor so much as vouchsafed to shew the use of them in their conduct; and so virtue, going only from mouth to mouth, makes no stay in the mind. It consists only in words, and does not appear in men's actions. This is one of the causes of the ignorance and depravation of men; let us therefore exercise by a continual practice, those whom we are obliged to teach learning and virtue; without such a precaution, the learned men, who shall come out of our schools, will be mere babblers, and the virtuous mere hypocrites.

MAXIM V.

The best instructions are those, which are grounded upon the solid principles of religion.

REFLECTION.—THE most solid instructions are those, which are grounded upon religion; because religion being the fountain of truth and justice, our intentions, when directed by it, are always right,

our designs lawful, our actions equitable, and our whole conduct agreeable to that order, which is absolutely necessary to make us attain to perfection. And in order to that perfection, religion teaches us what we owe to God, to men, and to ourselves; and what is the safest way to discharge those duties. With the help of religion, we shall not be deterred from the practice of virtue, by any human consideration; because it represents continually to us, the respect we owe to our God, who requires such a practice from us. Lastly, religion enables us to observe constantly the laws, precepts, advices, and all the instructions, whereby our lives may be regulated; because it is an eternal rule, which is not capable of any alteration. Let us consider those, who are always guided and directed by religion; and then we shall readily own all those truths, and consequently the truth of our maxim, that the best instructions are those, which are grounded upon the solid principles of religion.

The Man who trusts Others, or is trusted with a Secret.

MAXIM I.

What we have been trusted with by others, does not belong to us; it is a sacred thing, which we ought never to make use of.

REFLECTION.—IT is the interest of the publick society, to put men in mind of the obligation that lies upon them, to keep the secrets which they have been trusted with; for if such a faithfulness and discretion are not recommended to them as a duty, what will that society be, but a commerce of treason, frauds, and many other such disorders? Nobody will desire to be advised, in order to carry on his designs, nor ask any remedy, to cure himself of his faults, lest they should be discovered. Though a man be never so wise, so prudent, and so great a politician, all his steps will be doubtful and uncertain; because it will be a very difficult thing for him to be secure from knavery. Lastly, men will look upon one another, as so many unfaithful friends, and disguised enemies; and so, instead of relishing the sweetness of the commerce of the world, they will find nothing in it but a bitter hatred, and an unsurmountable antipathy. We have a daily experience of it, by the resentment of those, who have had their secrets betrayed; a resentment, which they express by their

contempt and aversion for those indiscreet men; they look upon them as inconsiderate men, or babblers, and therefore they despise them; or as artificious and treacherous men, and therefore they hate them. This is the notion I always had of those, who cannot keep a secret, and that notion has inspired me with so great a horror for them, that I am fully resolved never to imitate them. Suppose a man should become so great an enemy to me, as to persecute me violently; yet I would never be so treacherous as to revenge myself upon him, by discovering a secret wherewith he had trusted me. I receive a secret as a sacred *depositum*, which I fancy I cannot touch without committing a sacrilege. Others may, if they please, alter their conduct with respect to me; I shall not think for all that to have a right to alter a duty of discretion, which the publick society requires of me, being fully convinced that an injustice against me would not justify my unfaithfulness.

1. I shall willingly impart my thoughts, my desires, my intentions, my designs, and even my estate, to my friends, if they desire it; but I shall always except the secrets wherewith I have been trusted; because the laws of friendship do not at all require of me that I should acquaint them with them; it is their interest, upon account of their own secrets, not to induce me to such an injustice.

2. Though the confidence that is reposed in me be never so inconsiderable, yet if it be attended with some secret steps, I shall be sure to say nothing of it. Having used myself to be faithful in the least things, I can easily preserve an inviola-

ble faithfulness in those which are more important; and I am so afraid to betray myself that I do continually mistrust all my steps, in order to regulate them so well as to do and say nothing whereby one may discover what I design to keep secret; and that he who is most concerned in my silence, perceiving nothing in me that can put him in mind of the secret wherewith he trusted me, may be induced to doubt of it, and obliged to look for it in his own memory to be certain of it. The most curious and inquisitive men are so far from discovering what I have been trusted with, that they cannot so much as know whether I have been trusted with any thing; such a precaution makes one's fidelity safer; for it is with a secret as it is with a hidden treasure, when people know that it is hidden, it is half discovered.

3. But whatever discretion I may pretend to about such secrets as I have been trusted with, I had rather have none to keep. I could willingly speak in these words to those who will trust me with their most secret intentions. "Believe me, "do not tell me your secret if you are willing that "you and I should live quietly; if you do not "tell it, you will not be afraid that I should dis- "cover it, and I shall not be afraid that you should "accuse me of having discovered it; for I think "you may as well impart it to another as to me, "and if another man discovers it, I may be accused "of it." To conclude, all those reflections confirm me in the practice of this fine maxim concerning secrets, *neither to hear nor to tell them.*

MAXIM II.

Whoever imparts an important secret to another man, makes himself voluntarily his slave.

REFLECTION.—NO man ought therefore to impart his secrets but with great precaution; and when there is a great necessity for it. In effect, it seems to me that we can never be too distrustful and too cautious, when we go about to declare to a friend such things as would be prejudicial to us, if they were made publick. We must always weigh, with great exactness and a serious attention, the damage we might sustain by such a publick knowledge, and the advantage which might accrue to us by such a confidence; lest we should indiscreetly run the hazard of repenting of it in vain; because the dismal consequences of our indiscretion would be irreparable.

1. Let us reason thus within ourselves; whom shall I impart my secret to? To a fool? No, for he will never be able to keep it; to whom then? To a wise man; a wise man is not always wise; to whom shall I impart it at last? To my friend; how can I be sure that he will be always so?

2. If I impart my secret to N— because he is my friend, N— will also impart it to M— because he is his friend, and M— to O— for the same reason; and so my secret is made publick, and yet every one of them pretends to be a faithful man, because he thinks he may lawfully trust a friend with it; for it is certain, that the most discreet persons have one or two intimate friends,

from whom they cannot conceal any thing. Those friends have also other particular friends, in whom they do no less confide; and so the number of friends increasing by an infinite series, the repetitions of a secret increase likewise; so that it will be found at last, that as the first tile which receives a drop of water, imparting it to the next, imparts it to a third, and so on, until it be conveyed into the highway; so a secret goes about from mouth to mouth, and from ear to ear, and at last runs into the streets, and is made publick.

3. If I tell my secret, why should I be angry with the person whom I trusted with it, because he does not keep it? why do I tell it if nobody ought to know it? If I give the keeping of my secret to another man, I must needs confide more in him than in myself. If he is not a more discreet man than I am, why should I complain of him? it is not so much his interest as mine; it were in vain for me to require that another man should be discreet, if I am not so. If he should prove faithful to me, I might very well wonder at it, seeing he would be more faithful to me than I am to myself. I shall be sure that nobody will discover my secret, if I discover it to nobody.

4. I shall never trust a man with my secret, when he trusts me with his without knowing me well; because I am persuaded, that seeing he tells me his secret, without knowing me well, he may as well tell mine to another without knowing him at all.

The Tongue of Women.

MAXIM I.

Women would not be so much despised by men, if they did not say so many things that deserve to be despised.

REFLECTION.—IT is certain, that most men glory in expressing their contempt for women in general, whilst in particular they behave themselves towards them as if they esteemed them more than themselves. Whether such a contempt is an effect of reason, and such an esteem an effect of passion, may be the subject of a dissertation which I do not design to enlarge upon; I shall only say, at present, that men should not, in honour, speak of women with so much contempt, or should not love them so passionately. If they pretend that the weakness of women makes them contemptible, how will they be able to prove that they themselves are not contemptible, by reason of the weakness which they shew to them? How can they justify the empire which women exercise over them? An empire so true and so real, that men are so far from disowning it, that, on the contrary, they are willing to shew that they love to submit to it, and to feel the whole authority of it. That empire appears so often, and so many different ways, that most great events, as well as little ones, which we observe in the world, are begun, carried on, or brought to a conclusion upon the account of some women. They turn as they

please the designs of the most cunning politicians; they make the most serious philosophers lay aside their gravity; they overcome the most warlike men, and put in disorder those who profess the most exact regularity. Women will break the best projects by their presence, triumph over the noblest resolutions by a mere look, and destroy the most inveterate habits of virtue by a slight mark of affection. A man will do and undertake any thing to please a woman who has won his heart; she tames the wildest; she softens the most cruel; she humanizes the greatest misanthropes; she disarms the most furious; she afflicts the most jovial; she rejoices the most melancholy; she polishes the most clownish; there are few men but will praise women; there are few hearts but will fetch sighs for them; they will bring down the pride and haughtiness of the greatest and most illustrious men. As soon as they please (and they seldom fail to please when they have a mind to it) all their faults vanish away; the eyes of men are intent upon their merit, if they have any; or they fancy that they see a great merit in them, though they have none.

After so many advantages which women have above men, let us confess, that if men despise them, they give occasion to be themselves very much despised. Their contempt of women is a proof of the contempt which they deserve; seeing a man, who submits himself to a woman, must needs be weaker than she who subdues him, and consequently more contemptible. As long as women have the power to conquer men, they may

very well laugh at their satires and invectives; men may ridicule women in their absence, as much as they please, but women will have the pleasure to make them weep in their presence; men will depress women by their words, but women will humble men by their actions. Lastly, the submission, complaisance and respect, which they will force men to pay to them, will make amends for their contempt of them. "Men may say what "they please; but it is less impossible to find in a "woman the strongest and soundest reason of men, "than to find in a man the natural charms of wo-"men." Such a difference, wherein the force of women, and the weakness of men consist, will always make the former so much superior to the latter, as to extort from them an obedience which is as good as their esteem.

But let us make some reflections upon our maxim. Because women, according to our laws and customs, are not allowed to have any share in the administration of the most important affairs, the education that is bestowed upon them is suited to such things as are permitted to them, and which seem to be very inconsiderable, if compared with those wherein they have no share. Such an education, which fits them only for mean and inconsiderable things, contributes to their frequent speaking of several things, which, running upon contemptible subjects, expose them to the contempt of men. Do we not see now and then some men, who, having had almost the same education, discourse after the same manner, and so pitifully, that they are despised by those, who have had a

more manly, serious and noble education? So true it is, that women would be more esteemed, if they had been used to things more worthy of esteem. We must not refuse to do them that justice, upon the account of some of them, who, distinguishing themselves from others by their conduct, give us occasion to believe, that they have generally some dispositions, which would be more advantageous to them if they were better cultivated, or if they would be above the little things which have been the principal object of their application and study. When women speak of trifling things, I do not consider so much what they say, as what they might say, had they had a better education; and I do really believe, that they would be more solid in their discourses, if their business were more significant; and that they would be employed in things more solid, if it was required of them, or if they would give themselves that trouble. It is true, that they will not do it very willingly, not only because men are so far from requiring it, that they exempt them from it, and make them ashamed, when they go about it; but also because such a trouble does not very well agree with the soft, easy and idle life which they have been used to. Perhaps it would not be improper, (in order to excite them to make some efforts) to flatter them by representing to them the delicacy of their expressions, which is so natural to them, and the engaging and persuasive way, which they understand so well; perhaps, I say, it would not be improper to flatter them with the hopes of equalling men whenever they will

undertake some great things. They should at least try what they can do, but they must use these precautions; they must have a great capacity, without pretending to it; they must avoid an affected and precise way, which will only spoil their best qualities; and they must not fall into the ridiculousness of those half learned men, who have a great deal of vanity, because they have a little learning.

MAXIM II.

There is no secret which a woman will keep better than that of her age.

REFLECTION.—IT may be true, that women love to speak, because, having but little to do, they indemnify themselves by their words. It may be true likewise, that if they love to speak, they will not keep a secret which they have been trusted with, when they have nothing else to say. But without discussing the matter, let us say only that they will keep well enough the secret of their age, when they can reckon more years than they desire to have. They are so far from discovering that secret, that they use all sorts of artifices to conceal it; it is in order to it, that they use red and white paint, primming and fineries; that they keep company with the oldest women, and remove the youngest. A mother for example, having her mind taken up with the love of herself, and being jealous of a vain and ridiculous reputation of

youth, which is contradicted by her outside, to keep out of the way her daughter, who displeases her, as being an object the presence whereof destroys the flattering opinion she would give of her age, confines her into a solitude, that she may remain in the world with less reproach, and more pleasure and liberty; this she does, because it is the common opinion that young women only are lovely, and because men, without examining whether that opinion be well grounded or not, believe that they ought to love none but young women. Being thus prejudiced, they do not consider that the youth of women passes away, whilst their bad qualities remain, if they have any, and stick so constantly to them, that they never fail to turn the love of men into indifferency, if not into aversion; which is a fatal effect of a man's love, when it is only produced by some transient charms. But opinion prevails, and will perhaps always prevail upon those reasonings, and so will always afford women some specious pretences to hide the number of their years, when it exceeds the term which opinion has prescribed to them in order to please. Why do not men tell them, that they may get their love by some qualities more solid, if they desire that they should be sincere in what concerns their age? If they deceive men therein, it is because they are in a manner forced by men to deceive them. However, women must not fancy that they can easily deceive them; for men being persuaded that is is their interest to maintain the right which opinion gives them, and women out of a mutual jealousy betraying one another upon

that point, there is no need at all to consult a certificate out of a church book, to know their age; their precautions are not proof against the inquiries which every body makes into it. They who are the least concerned in it, delight in such a curiosity; and the more women seem to affect to conceal their age, the more men are desirous to discover it; nay, they will often make some considerable additions to it, the better to prove, as it seems, that they blame them justly for their subtracting out of it. It were therefore better for women to be moderate in that point; they need only take care not to have any passion that does not become their age.

MAXIM III.

When women are immodest in their words, they give occasion to believe that they are immodest in their lives.

REFLECTION.—WHEN women are free in their words, they are thought to be free in their actions; at least, men are so persuaded of it, that they are bolder with them, than with those who are more modest in their discourses; the modesty of the latter restrains the boldest men; but because the too great freedom of the former seems to give the liberty to make some attempts upon them, men will do it so much the more boldly, because they fancy that they cannot fail of a good success. And lastly, the same liberty, which encourages men to apply themselves to those women, will soon

give them a disgust for them. Though women be never so beautiful, if they are not modest, they will please only some men, but they will never be constantly loved by any body; for a man will not love long what he does not esteem; and nothing is perfectly loved, but what is thought to be perfect; which is the privilege of virtue. If a woman is not virtuous, her modesty will make one believe that she is; which is the privilege of modesty. Bashfulness and modesty are the surest guards of a woman's honesty; and therefore when women are immodest, one will be apt to believe that they are not honest; as a man is not brave enough, if he has only the courage of a woman; so a woman is not chaste enough, if she has only the chastity of a man. The least faults in this case are considerable crimes; the most discreet and modest manners are the most powerful charms, which they can make use of, to be constantly loved by men. Montaigne was of the same opinion; and that opinion is general enough. "Women," says he, "will find, if they mind it, that if they are modest, "they will be not only very much esteemed for "it, but also more beloved. A man never leaves "his game for a denial, if it proceeds from chastity "and not from choice. Though we swear, threaten "and complain never so much, we love them the "better for it. There is no such allurement as "modesty." Seeing women desire by all means to be loved by men, let them be discreet and modest, if they desire to be loved constantly. Whatever they may do, they will never be co

stantly loved, but according as they prove constantly modest.

The Language of Love.

MAXIM I.

When a woman does often hear a man say, that he loves her, she will love him at last.

REFLECTION.—WOMEN desire to be loved, and therefore they are very much disposed to hear favourably those, who tell them that they are in love with them; and after they have heard them say so for a long time, they are so much the more willing to believe it, because they wish for it. Lastly, when they are well persuaded that men love them, it is a very difficult thing for them to forbear loving. Women are so well pleased when they are loved, that it makes them find some amiableness in those who do often tell them that they love them; and seeing they believe that men love them because they are lovely, are they not obliged in gratitude to love in their turn those who love them, and appear to them lovely? But, laying aside gratitude, (for it is of no great power in this matter) let us say that the sensibility of both sexes for one another, and the most natural relation that is to be found between them, do extremely dispose them to a mutual love, let the reason, which moves

them to it, be never so little; and therefore it is in vain for men to rely upon their strength, in order to resist some attacks, which are commonly made with great art, and which they are so naturally disposed to yield to.

MAXIM II.

Though the love we express for others, seems to be never so much uninterested, yet it has always some relation to self-love.

REFLECTION.—NOTWITHSTANDING the many protestations of a love altogether uninterested, do not believe it easily, before you have made a trial of many years, whereby you may be convinced, that nothing else but your own interest has excited the love which others express for you, and in order to succeed in your trial, take off all hopes of obtaining any thing of you; but, if you observe it well, you will always perceive that a man hopes, and consequently that he is interested. We must not therefore expect any constant love; we have always an eye to ourselves in all our passions; and so we cease insensibly to love, when self-love ceases insensibly to be satisfied; which is a common thing; because we grow commonly weary of what we have enjoyed a long time. A man will at first express an uninterested and reasonable love for you, to justify your engagement; keep up therefore his good opinion of you by not permitting him to continue to love you, but as he

began; seeing he has only shewed a reasonable love for you, in order to get yours; it is a sign that he had a mind to persuade you, that you ought not to suffer any body to love you, but out of reason.

MAXIM III.

As we do not appear always lovely, so we must not expect to be always loved.

REFLECTION.—WE appear lovely, because we bring along with us the charms of novelty; because we take care to hide our faults; because we are respectful, complaisant and assiduous; because we excite some desires, and keep up some hopes; because we shew ourselves on the fairest side; lastly, because we endeavour to be loved by others. But when we are come to that point, that we have obtained the desired love, and enjoyed it for some time, the constraint we have been under, grows tiresome, and we get out of it to shew ourselves such as we are; our eyes, which love does commonly shut up, are opened by the indifferency which use seldom fails to produce; so that lovers, perceiving one another's faults, have no longer any regard for one another; and so every one thinks, he may very well dispense with the respect, complaisance and assiduity he used before, as a duty which his rising passion seemed to require. And whilst they have no more any regard for one another, others come in, and take

their places so much the more easily, because they are very well contented to leave them. Let nobody therefore complain much in such a case; inconstancy is always more or less reciprocal; that is, some will change sooner, others later, but they will all change, because there is not any one person perfect. "Seeing it has pleased God, that "we should not be perfect enough to be always "lovely; why do we pretend to be always loved? "There is no reason to upbraid any body with his "inconstancy in love, as if it were a very great "evil; it is no more in the power of some persons "to love or not to love, than to be well or to be "sick. All that can be reasonably expected from "inconstant persons is ingenuously to own their "levity, and not to add treachery to inconstancy." One may be innocent with the latter, but the former is always an ill thing. One must not therefore expect to be always loved, whatever protestations one may hear of a constant and perpetual love. That love will be like the moon; it will decrease, when it can no more increase. "Believe me," says Propertius, "nobody is faith-"ful in love; I know it by experience." You, therefore, who pretend to so much wisdom, penetration and prudence, can you rely, as upon a very solid thing, upon the love of such a person; I will not say, who perhaps laughs at your weakness, and loves you only out of interest; but who, if she has a sincere affection for you, will at last change it into indifferency, because she will be weary of it; or because the sight of a new object, attended with the charms of novelty, will soon

please her, and deprive you of a love which you bought at the expense of so much trouble and weakness? Every body must therefore, for his own happiness, look upon love in the point of sight which terminates it, I mean in its change. And then he will begin to love without eagerness, he will continue to love without easiness, and he will cease to be loved without grief.

MAXIM IV.

An angry lover is extremely desirous to allay his anger.

REFLECTION.—WHEN lovers express some spite and anger by words, they would be glad to be told, that they have no reason to fall into a passion, and to vex themselves; they accuse those whom they love, only to oblige them to justify themselves; and they blame them only to have an occasion to acquit them. The more they seem to be willing to find them guilty, the more they desire that they should shew their innocency. At the very same time that those angry lovers are ready to fall out, they would be already reconciled; their hearts are more favourable to those who are the objects of their anger, than to themselves; they make some imprecations; but they would be extremely vexed if their words were attended with the effects. The heart of an amorous accuser will afford him better reasons to justify the person whom he accuses, than the person accused can find to justify herself; the

former will soon be appeased, if the latter appears willing to appease him. Spite will not therefore cure a man of that passion; (love does not break, it rips) on the contrary, it may strengthen it, if the person with whom he is angry knows how to make a good use of it. Terence expresses himself admirably well upon this subject; especially in the first act of his *Eunuch*, when a slave seeing his master (who being angry with his mistress, was resolved to see her no more) speaks to him in this manner: "Indeed, sir, if you can so far prevail "upon yourself, it is the most advantageous and "the most glorious thing you can do; but if you "begin once, and have not courage enough to go "on; if, out of an amorous impatience, you return "thither when nobody desires it, and before you "are reconciled, shewing thereby that you love "her so much that you cannot be without her, "you are a man undone; she will laugh at you "as soon as she sees you are overcome. Lastly, "before it be too late, consider again and again, "what you are to do; for you must not fancy that "a thing which has neither reason nor measure in "itself can be directed by reason and measure. "You must know, sir, that lovers are necessarily "exposed to all these inconveniences; to repulses, "suspicions and quarrels. To-day there is a "truce; to-morrow there will be a war, and at "last a new peace will be made. If you pretend "that reason can fix things that are altogether "inconstant and uncertain; it is just as if you "would reconcile folly and reason; for as to what "you say within yourself, now that you are

"angry; I! to go and see her! she, who prefers "my rival to me! who despises me! who would "not receive me yesterday! let me die; I had "rather die! I will make known what I am! "All that great fire will be extinguished in a "moment, with the smallest tear that shall come "out of her eyes with much ado, and when she "has rubbed them very hard; you will be ready "to blame yourself, and to give her such a satis-"faction as she desires." The best advice that can be given to those who are altogether resolved to love no more is, to shun the objects of their love. The senses being no more struck with the object, the impression it made will more easily wear away; whereas the more it is present, the more it makes deep and lasting impressions. As it removes from the eyes, it removes likewise from the mind, and consequently can make no long stay in the heart.

The complaining Man.

MAXIM I.

We are at last unwilling to pity those who are always complaining.

REFLECTION.—IT is true, when a man complains, he has a mind to ease his grief, and that he does really find some comfort by complaining; for

as we are never more affected with joy, than when we have the pleasure to express it to others; so nothing will allay our grief so much, as the liberty of complaining. Nevertheless, we ought to be moderate in our complaints; we must not be always upon the doleful tone; we must not be troublesome to our friends, by speaking too much of our inconveniences. Self love makes us extremely sensible of our afflictions; but we must not expect the same sensibility from others, seeing it is also the interest of their self love not to suffer themselves to be surprised by such a sensibility. You may, if you please, pour your heart into the bosoms of your friends, by a moderate account of your sufferings; but do not overflow them with a torrent of complaints, if you will not tire their patience, and make yourself as troublesome to them, as you are afflicted; if you make your case always woful, nobody will pity you at last; they will think that you are more uneasy than unhappy, and more impatient than worthy of compassion. "He who complains without reason, will not be "pitied when there is a reason for it; he, who is "always complaining, will never be pitied. I "leave off every day that childish and unreason-"able humour, which makes us desirous to move "the compassion of our friends; we make our af-"flictions greater than they are, to excite their "compassions; we praise those who show a great "firmness in adversity; but we blame our friends "when they are not moved with our misfortunes."

"It is a ridiculous thing to complain of one's "miseries in an eloquent manner; he who gives

"himself the trouble to discourse of them, saves "me the trouble of comforting him. When I am "sick, I represent my sickness such as it is, and I "avoid ominous words and affected exclamations. "They who visit a wise man during his sickness, "must have, if not a merry, at least a sedate coun- "tenance." I am so far from loving to complain, that I do not love to speak of my misfortunes; nor do I care that any body should speak to me of them; those mutual discourses do but fix the imagination upon grievous objects. I am very willing to hear the complaints of unhappy men; but I am not at all inclined to complain before others, because I do not think myself to be so considerable a man as to deserve that any body should vouchsafe to share in my grief.

MAXIM II.

The complaints of men do not so much proceed from their great sufferings, as from too great a niceness.

REFLECTION.—THE most happy men are the most sensible; the least thing will make them easy and discontented. They are certainly to be pitied, when we consider that they are full of sorrows in the very bosom of what they call felicity. "It is a sign of weakness to subject one's self to a "particular way of living; it is a cowardly soft- "ness, and a delicateness unworthy of an honest "man, which makes us troublesome and unaccept- "able in conversation, and too tender and soft."

A grain of sand, a little too big, hurts the foot of a man, who seldom goes out of his house, or who goes always in a coach. A little wind will bring a rheumatism upon N— who has no other business than to think continually of his riches and conveniences; a small fluxion, which would not disquiet M—in the least, as being used to work and fatigue, alarms and vexes O— whom a soft idleness renders extremely sensible to the smallest pain. I learn from thence, that there is nothing more contrary to the sweetness of life, than to love it too much. The more a man indulges himself in a soft life, the more the least sufferings will appear to him grievous and intolerable. He will be always alarmed and uneasy, because he knows that the causes of small pains are very frequent. Ever since I do not value a small pain, I live a very quiet life.

The Comforter.

MAXIM I.

He who thinks more of speaking fine words, than of giving good reasons, is a wretched comforter.

REFLECTION.—THIS happens very often; because men, to satisfy their vanity, are more desirous to shew that they speak well, than to allay the grief of those, whom they undertake to comfort. It is not always by the choice of our words,

nor even by the weight of our reasons, that we can ease afflicted persons; the effect of our consolation does commonly depend upon the manner of doing it. We must seem at first to be of their opinion; by that means we dispose them to hear us more patiently, when we go about to oppose it. "We "must comply with them in the beginning, and "seem to approve and excuse their complaints; "and then we may easily and insensibly go farther, "and use such arguments as are proper to cure "them." Win them therefore by your complaisance, that you may the better insinuate your reasons to them. "He who goes about to comfort a "man, will never succeed in it, if he opposes his "passion: such an opposition offends him, and in-"creases his grief; contention will exasperate him. "I find that if any body in common discourse "contests with me about a thing, which I have said "carelessly, I take offence at it, and maintain it "more eagerly, than I would do a thing wherein "I should be concerned." But above all things, do not insist much upon the subject of a man's affliction; remove insensibly the idea of the afflicting object. "Make a diversion turn gently "your discourse another way, and make it fall by "degrees upon a subject that has some relation to "it, and then upon a more remote one, so as to "make the afflicting thought vanish away imper-"ceptibly." But it falls out unluckily for afflicted people, that use has introduced quite a contrary conduct, by so many compliments of condolence, by mourning cloaths, and a world full of sad and melancholy objects.

MAXIM II.

He who knows not how to comfort himself, will not be able to comfort others.

REFLECTION.—HE who desires to have the necessary qualifications to comfort himself, ought to know how to prepare himself for all the events which may afflict him; he ought to know their weakness and his own strength, when they do actually afflict him; he ought to persuade himself that the more impatiently he will bear them, the more he will be sensible to them; thus having got the science of comforting himself, he will be able to comfort others.

I shall set down the instructions which I have followed, or which I would follow, if there was an occasion for it. I desire my readers to receive them only as some reflections: for I do not presume that they are infallible rules; to lead a man to the tranquillity he looks for, I am persuaded that many others may think better than I upon the subject. If any one fancies that it is not always safe to imitate my example, I shall perhaps move him to give me a better one, which I shall willingly follow; for it matters not from whence tranquillity proceeds, provided we may obtain it.

REFLECTIONS

TO COMFORT ONE'S SELF IN ADVERSITY.

1. ALL sorts of misfortunes may happen to me; I ought therefore to prepare myself for them, and think it an advantage, when any of them does not happen to me.

2. I have lost a cause; I knew very well that I might lose it, though my conduct was never so just; and I expected such a possibility. I hear that one of my best friends is dead; I am moved with his death; but I am not too much afflicted, because I knew that he was as mortal a man as I am. I have been horribly calumniated; but I am not surprised at it; do not I know that the most unspotted innocence cannot be secure from the maliguity of wicked men? I have been deprived of a pleasant and honourable employment; I never looked upon that employment as my own, so as to believe that I could not be deprived of it; but as a loan, which I would willingly restore, whenever it should be demanded of me. I was a very rich man, I had a vast income, I got prodigiously by trading, I owed nothing, but others were much indebted to me; all those things are vanished away, and I am not amazed at it: for I knew by experience, that a bankrupt, a theft, a mere want of attention, or exactness, or an unforeseen accident would be able to make me poor, and to render me more indebted to others than they were to me. I had some friends, who gave

me continual marks of their affection; they seemed to interest themselves in every thing wherein I was concerned; they expressed to me their love and tenderness upon all occasions; but they have all disappeared; a revolution in my fortune made them all run away from me; I suspected before, that adversity would render me as odious to them, as they seemed to love me in my prosperity. I was protected by a patron of great credit; he could obtain any thing of the ministers; they never refused him any thing that he asked, and he was always ready to ask in my favour every thing that I required of him; that time is no more, the wheel of fortune made him go down so low, that he wants a protector himself; I should have been amazed at such a revolution, if I had not considered, that a more powerful concurrent than he, might soon overthrow his fortune together with mine. I had a glorious reputation in the world; every body spoke honourably of me every where; I was looked upon as a man very much distinguished from others, upon the account of my talents; but contempt has succeeded those applauses; I suspected that such a change might very well happen; for, as interest and complaisance are commonly the causes of the praises that are bestowed upon me, so a small fault which they shall commit, a little defect which shall be observed in their conduct, an unlucky success in one of their enterprises, or one of those caprices, which whole nations are frequently subject to, will bring down those men as low by the contempt which others express for them, as they have been eleva-

ted by their applauses. Thus, relying upon nothing, I shall not be afflicted with any thing, so as to lose the tranquillity of my mind.

3. I excite myself to bear patiently all sorts of misfortunes, before they happen; I use myself to them, before they come; and, with the help of meditation, I acquire that patience, which others never think of acquiring beforehand.

4. It is very difficult for me not to be moved with any unexpected thing; and therefore I endeavour to foresee every thing, and to represent to my mind, not only what does commonly happen, but also whatever may happen.

5. When I am abroad, I fancy that some disasters have happened in my house, but so when I come home, I think myself happy, for not finding any disorder in it, which I might have found.

6. At the very same time that I resolve to be a constant observer of virtue, I am persuaded that I shall be continually obliged to struggle with fortune.

7. Though I think myself never so safe, yet I am always prepared for any surprise; amidst the caresses of fortune, I expect to be assaulted by her.

8. I have observed that there is not any one man in the world, who enjoys all the good things thereof, or who enjoys them as long as he lives; we see some, who enjoy riches; but they are humbled by their birth. Others have an indisputable nobility, but they want what is necessary to keep it up. One man is equally noble and rich, but he is obliged to live a private and retired life, because nobody loves him. Another gets a vast es-

tate by a happy marriage; but he must leave it to some strangers, because he has no children. Another has as many children as he can wish for; but their disorderly life makes him uneasy, and afflicts him. Lastly, whatever condition we may be in, there is always something which we desire or fear.

9. I am not discouraged in adversity, nor proud in prosperity; because I take care to prepare myself against all events; such a preparation makes me modest, when I am happy, and patient, when I am unhappy.

10. If I enjoy that pretended felicity, which arises from the good things of fortune, either I know that my condition is subject to change, or I do not know it; if I do not know it, how can I flatter myself to be happy with such an ignorance, which, disabling me from foreseeing the afflicting revolutions that may happen to me, will make me more sensible to them? If I know the inconstancy of fortune, it will be very difficult for me not to be afraid to lose what I know can be taken from me; how can a perfect happiness be consistent with a continual fear? If I am not much troubled with such a loss, it is a sign that the advantage it deprives me of can afford me no great satisfaction; I conclude from what has been said, that I ought to look upon all the good things of this world with a prudent indifferency, lest the tranquillity of my mind should depend upon them.

11. If fortune leaves me, she will but prevent me; for it is certain that I must leave her some time or other; what signifies it whether I leave

her when I die, or whether she forsakes me now?

12. We do not know our strength, if we never make a trial of it. A felicity, which has never been attacked, cannot bear the least assault; but when it has, as it were, struggled with inconveniences and misfortunes, it hardens with ill usage, it yields to no disasters, and if it falls at any time, it will fight upon its knees. "That part of "the body, which is most exercised, is commonly "the strongest. The strongest trees are those "which are most shaken by the winds."

13. A wise man feels a misfortune, but he overcomes it, and raises himself as it were in a throne of tranquillity and peace, above all the miseries wherewith he is assaulted and threatened; every adversity is an exercise for him.

14. Adversity brings me back again into the right way, and enables me to return to God; it removes flatterers from me, that I may know his truth; and affords me wherewith to appease his justice, by offering to him the sacrifice of my body and soul.

15. It is with virtue as with the best perfumes, which never smell so well as when they are bruised and thrown into the fire. Such an advantage has the man, in my opinion, who triumphs over adversity!

16. The virtue of some men is so weak, that it wants to be kept up by some disgraces; some humble men would be undone, if they were not humbled; some regular men would leave the right way, if God was not pleased to keep them

within their bounds, as it were, by a hedge of thorns; some compassionate men would harden themselves, if they were not softened by the sense of some miseries; the devotion of some men would be extinguished, if it was not kindled again with the fire of some trials.

17. The degree of my fortune is not very high; but there are a world of men below me still. If opinion makes me think that princes are happy men, because stately and magnificent palaces are built for them, reasons hinder me from believing that I am an unhappy man, when I see these poor workmen, who earn their bread with much sweating, by building those very same palaces, and who looking upon me, think that I am as happy as those princes appear to me to be. It is true, that I am not a chancellor, nor a president, nor a secretary of state, nor a comptroller general, nor a minister, nor a duke; but it is true also, that I am not a ploughman, nor a vine dresser, nor a porter, nor a chairman. Those unhappy men have some intervals of contentment: have I less reason than they have to be contented? Few men make such a reflection, and yet it is as useful, as it is easy to make it. There are many, who will always look upon those who are above them, but never upon those who are below them. One man, who goes before them, vexes them more than an infinite number of others, whom they precede, will please them; and therefore few men are happy, because most of them are preceded by somebody.

18. *Seneca.* It is a spectacle worthy of God, to see a man who is so bold as to march against fortune, and so courageous as to challenge her. What heroism, to have the security of a God, with the weakness of man! Great examples are particularly to be seen in the changes of fortune. A truly courageous man is no more troubled and astonished when he is chosen to try his strength against adversity, than a brave soldier, when he hears the noise of the trumpets which call him to a battle. If he falls, his greatness will not suffer by it; men will have the same veneration for him, as for demolished temples, the very ruins whereof are reverenced and adored by religious persons.

19. The soul of a man is never better known than in adversity; one may see then his firmness or his weakness. Adversity lays open his true sentiments, though they be never so deep; the disguised man disappears in the midst of sufferings, and naked truth remains. I never knew so well the force of my mind, as when grief and sorrow undertook to cast it down; the resistance it makes on such violent occasions, renders it more valuable to me, than all the peaceable tranquillity which it does enjoy in the bosom of softness, and amongst the sweets of prosperity.

20. What is it that shews the skill of a pilot? A storm. What is it that shews the strength of a wrestler? The wrestling place. What is it that shews the bravery of a captain? A battle. What is it that shews a courageous soul? Adversity. In effect, if I had never been in adversity, I should not have known myself so well as I do.

When I came to know my weakness, I went about to strengthen it; when I came to know my strength, I took care to exercise it, that it might not decay.

21. I do not suffer much by the changes of fortune; because I never took much delight in her favours; no man was ever cast down with her injuries, but he suffered himself before to be deceived by her favours and caresses. That I might not fear the treasons of fortune, I despise her flatteries; that I might not be seduced by her flatteries, I expect to be betrayed by her.

22. As I do not pretend to be so well qualified as to deserve the favours of fortune; so nobody hears me complain of her unkindness to me.

23. It is not enough for me to bear the evils of adversity with patience, I endeavour to go further, I do my utmost to make an advantage of them; I have had a loss; instead of throwing away my time in disquiet and vexation, I will spend it in the regulation of my passions, and the improvement of my understanding; I have not been able to obtain what I demanded; I shall endeavour to make myself more worthy of it. Am I tormented with a sickness? It will give me such a disgust for life, that I shall not be troubled with the fear of death.

24. When I am reconciled to my pains, they are less grievous to me, than when I bear them impatiently; I cannot avoid that pain, I will therefore suffer it; if I grew impatient, I should side with my pain against myself, to torment me more. Why should I not use myself to every thing as it happens, seeing I cannot hinder it? I

will not have my happiness depend upon such things as are not in my power. That maxim is of very great use.

25. The more I think upon any afflicting pain, the more I make it insupportable to me, if I do not find myself strong enough to bear it; it is therefore better for me not to fix my eyes upon it, if it be possible.

26. To see many other men in the same adversity wherein I am, can be no comfort to me; I mean, that I do not bear them such an ill will, as to be more easy in my sufferings, only because I see them suffer.

27. Evils may indeed afflict me, but they will never force me to ask quarter.

28. I love to hear that philosopher, who being insulted by fortune, who had taken away from him all that he had, laughed at her, and stretching out a rope to her, told her: "Go, fortune, "and hang thyself, out of grief, for having not "been able to disquiet my mind and to shake my "virtue."

29. I do not desire any evil; for I should presume too much upon my strength; but I desire only virtue, which enables us to suffer them patiently.

30. I shall never think that prosperity is a true and real advantage, as long as I see that it is to be found amongst the wicked, and that they are not better men for it. "Virtue is asleep in a calm; "the vigour of the mind grows slack in tranquilli- "ty;,being content with happiness, we do not mind "wisdom; being filled with the temporal goods

"we enjoy, we forget the eternal ones which we "hope for; and because we have all we desire, "we do not desire what is most necessary to us."

31. I should never trust fortune, though in order to be reconciled to me, she bestowed plentifully honours, riches and glory upon me; I would always put all those things in a place, where she might take them away again, without causing any grief to me. "Fortune, who is pleased with cru- "elty, and always constant in her insolence, does "not permit that the riches and honours, which are "in her power, should remain long in one place; "she removes them very often, and to-day she "bestows upon me what she will perhaps bestow "upon another to-morrow; if she will stay with "me, I am well contented with it; but if she "claps her wings in order to retire, I shall wil- "lingly give her back again all that she lent me; "I shall wrap up myself in my own virtue, being "contented with an honest poverty."

32. It is not in my power to dispose of fortune; but it is in my power to make a good use of what she gives me, and to slight what she does not give me. It is not in my power to be in prosperity, or to get out of adversity; but it is in my power to enjoy prosperity without pride and haughtiness, and to bear adversity without trouble and impatience.

33. If I ask some favours of fortune, perhaps I shall not obtain them; but I can very easily forbear asking them.

34. Fortune may take away from me, against my will, all that I have, afflict me with a sickness,

expose me to evil speaking, and to some other misfortunes, but she cannot make me proud, envious, revengeful, hypocritical, cowardly, deceitful, and covetous, against my will. She may deprive me of some pleasures, but she cannot make me uneasy; I will not have my happiness and tranquillity to depend upon her caprices.

REFLECTIONS

TO KEEP ONE'S SELF FROM MELANCHOLY.

1. IF I was melancholy, the smallest pain I feel would become great. Sadness makes the most indifferent things insupportable, the mirth of others afflicting, and their virtue nauseous. It is a ridiculous thing to dress wisdom and virtue with sadness and ill humour; yet it is a very common thing, and it seems very fashionable. I see often some of our pretended wise men, who fancy they should derogate from their wisdom, if they appeared merry. "I neither love nor esteem sadness, it is a foolish and ugly ornament. The "Italians have rightly called malignity by that "name; for it is a hurtful, foolish, cowardly and "base quality; the stoicks will not allow of it in "their wise men."

2. If I could not forbear being cast down with sorrow, I would take care at least to conceal it, when I am in company, lest I should spoil the pleasure of it. I always endeavour to appear well pleased with others and myself, and I am in effect, as much as I can, such as I appear to be.

3. A little thing will rejoice me, because I am willing to rejoice at a little thing; I willingly rejoice at any little thing that gives me occasion for it, and I am not troubled with every little thing, that gives me occasion to be melancholy; because either of them do frequently happen.

4. When I practise any virtue that is attended with gravity and austerity, I put on a cheerful and serene countenance, to make it more acceptable. But if it be true, that gaiety is very pleasant, it is no less true that it does a man no honour, unless it be suited to the person, the time and place, and other objects of decorum; it must be seasoned with prudence, and supported by wisdom. When I mix gaiety with gravity, I keep the one from turning into sadness, and the other into a foolish and ridiculous mirth. There is nothing so like melancholy as too great a gravity; and there is nothing so like extravagance, as too great a gaiety. If any good thing happens to me, though it be true that joy is very talkative, yet I do not speak of it before unhappy men, because I might increase their trouble and their sorrows, if they compared their misery with my prosperity.

Read again what I have said concerning adversity, that you may not be overwhelmed with melancholy.

REFLECTIONS

TO KEEP ONE'S SELF FROM BEING VEXED AT THE CONTEMPT, INJURIOUS WORDS, AND EVIL SPEAKING OF OTHER MEN.

1. WHAT! Shall I give every body the power to make me uneasy whenever they please?

2. I will not answer the contempt and injurious words of other men any other way, than by observing my conduct, to make it worthy of praise and esteem; and by that means, the contempt which others express for me, will return upon them. The wisdom of those who are persecuted, renders their persecutors a great deal more odious than they would be.

3. What is the publick esteem, which may be refused to me, but the opinion of many men in general, who are not much valued in particular? In effect, how many men are there, who do not esteem what deserves it, but only what they hear others esteem! How many men who approve what they do not know to be worthy of approbation!

4. The esteem of men is so inconstant, that I cannot apprehend how any one should give himself so much trouble to obtain it. He, who approves us on a particular occasion, will be no less disposed to depress us upon another occasion. That very esteem will often be the cause of it, because it rather excites jealousy than affection.

Whoever thinks that the approbation of other men is the reward of virtuous actions, builds upon an uncertain and tottering foundation.

5. The most perfect and the best grounded esteem, does not contribute in the least to our perfection. That esteem is only the regard men have for us, which supposes that there are some good things in us, but it does not bestow them upon us; for it adds nothing to us, it leaves us such as we are, and so it is of no use to us. That regard subsists no longer than men apply themselves to us, and that application is rare and of no long continuance.

6. Though esteem flatters very much the vanity of men, yet I had rather get their love. Esteem will also admit me into their minds, but love will open their hearts to me. If they esteem me, they may be animated with jealousy against me, but if they love me, they will have none of those malignant passions, which do commonly trouble our repose.

7. There is scarce any one man who esteems me less than I esteem myself; and because I do not value myself, I am not angry with those, who do not seem to value me; I only take care to acquire that which should move them to esteem me.

8. I stand too much in need of perfection, to think of glory; the main thing is to make myself a better man than I am. The shortest way to deserve glory, is to do for conscience what we do for glory.

9. Let us see what that glory is, which men seek so eagerly, and which they lose with so much grief. Human glory consists altogether in the advantageous judgment which others make of us: but they are commonly men to whom we are not well known, who have no great love for us, and their judgment is neither very solid, nor very much to be esteemed; so that we do often despise them in any other thing. Besides, the judgment they make of us is of no manner of use to us; it adds nothing to our souls or bodies; it lessens none of our miseries; we are only deceived by it, because we are induced thereby to judge of ourselves, not according to truth, but according to the opinion of others; and after we have been amused with it during our lives, it disappears all of a sudden when we come to die; because we lose then the sense of all those things. Is there any thing more vain and more useless, and consequently more unworthy of our desires? "There "is nothing more unreasonable than to seek glory; "for being needy and indigent within ourselves, "our nature being imperfect, and wanting con- "tinual mending, we ought to make that our chief "business; we must not fill ourselves with wind "and voice; we want a more solid substance to "recruit ourselves. It were a foolish thing for a "hungry man to provide himself a fine garment, "instead of a good meal; we must mind the most "necessary things." Virtue, probity and wisdom are the most necessary things, and the only ones that deserve by themselves to be praised and

applauded. Our glory consists in the testimony of our consciences, I mean when our consciences tell us that we do not depart from the rules of justice and reason.

10. The esteem which others express for us, is often very equivocal; because their thoughts are often contrary to their words, and because a mere motive of interest forces them to give us their approbation. Such a one looks graciously upon us, who will laugh at us behind our backs.

11. Nothing is truly valuable but what is immortal. Glory is of no duration; I do not therefore value it much. I esteem only virtue, because, though others do not esteem it, yet it will be eternally valuable. "It is impossible to find a "good and safe way in the windy confusion of "rumours, reports, and vulgar opinions, which "drive us up and down. We must not aim at "such a floating and uncertain thing; let us con- "stantly follow reason, and let the publick appro- "bation follow us the same way, if it pleases."

12. Contempt being an imaginary evil, it does not afflict me; but I have reason to be afflicted for my faults, because they are true and real evils. Yet every body is not of my mind. How many men, who are more sensibly moved with the contempt which others express for them, than they are sorry for their contemptible qualities! So true it is, that the strokes we give ourselves, do not hurt us so much, as those which we receive from others. What an injustice! To be so imperfect, without being sorry for it; and to be so

much afflicted when our great imperfection comes to be known. Thus we are sensible to some imaginary evils, whilst we are often unconcerned for faults, which are real evils. "I have seen "some porters loaded with two or three hundred "weight, who could not bear two or three hard "words." Which of those two things, I beseech you, should have been the most troublesome? We need only consider which of them depends less upon imagination.

13. Ever since I agree with myself, I find myself very much disposed to agree with others, though their contempt of me be never so great. An unquiet and restless mind is often the cause of division. How shall we be able to endure other men, if we cannot endure ourselves?

14. The contempt of injurious words stifles evil speaking, but resentment revives it. I should acknowledge the strength of its arms, if I confessed that they have wounded me; I should please my enemy, if I intimated to him, that he can make me uneasy.

15. I could patiently hear a frantick, or a feverish and a raving man, though he abused me never so much; and why should I not hear as patiently the ill language and calumnies of a wicked man?

16. I wish I could give such an extent to my mind, that it might raise itself above all the attempts of insulting men. I might find some tranquillity in that vast extent; as a stone thrown into the sea raises no storm in it; so an injurious

word will never cause any trouble or emotion in a great soul.

17. He, who is not more unwilling to hear injurious words than praises, has made a great progress in the study of wisdom. The reason of it is, because a wise man does not regulate his sentiments by opinion; he is persuaded that true honour consists in the virtue of a virtuous man, and not in the opinion, which men, subject to error, inconstancy and prejudices, may entertain of him.

18. If I was in possession of one of those dignities, which raise men very much above others, I should not desire more honour and respect, than would be necessary to keep upon my authority. Abating the right of my power, I should very little care for that which goes by the name of glory, with respect to that power.

19. It were a dishonour to me, to be honoured by some men; how can men of no honour, do honour to others?

20. "I do not care so much what I am in the "opinion of other men, as what I am in myself." How can I take delight in being esteemed, if I know that I deserve to be despised? But on the contrary, when I am despised, it is a great comfort to me, if my conscience tells me that I am worthy of esteem. "It seems to me, that for a "man to be known to others, is in a manner to "have his life and duration in their keeping. As "for me, I think that I am only in myself; and as "for that other life, which is in the knowledge of

"my friends, if I consider it naked and simple in "itself, I know very well, that I neither enjoy it, "nor get any benefit by it, but by the vanity of "fantastical opinion; and when I am dead, I "shall be less benefited by it still." Let us therefore place our true glory in ourselves; because it will remain with us, as long as we have our being. "None but you know whether you are base and "cruel, or loyal and devout; others do not see "you; they only guess at you: they do not see "so well your humour, or your cunning; and "therefore be sure not to mind what they think of "you, but only what you think of yourself."

21. Upon some occasions I speak of my own faults, which does often perplex my enemies, and deprives them of the pleasure of discoursing about them. The reason of their trouble and perplexity is, because they are persuaded that, seeing I know my imperfections, I will do my endeavour to mend them; they are not mistaken in their conjectures. A free and generous confession disarms injuries.

22. When men speak ill of me, I get a double advantage by it. First, I know by that means their character, and so I learn to mistrust them. Secondly, I know which is the weakest part of myself, because it has been attacked first, and therefore I fortify it, that others may not undertake the same attack.

23. If a false report goes abroad concerning me, I hope it will not last long; the life which I lead will justify my past life; I justify myself for no

other reason, but because I ought to do it out of charity to myself.

24. I would not be angry if any one should affirm that I am sick, when I am well; I am not angry neither, if I am accused, when I am innocent.

25. When a man cries every time he is touched, it is a sign that he is not very sound. I should think myself very weak in my mind, if I was too sensible to every thing that seems to attack my own self love.

26. If I am unjustly accused, I shall modestly justify myself; if my reasons are not approved, my innocence shall be my comfort; perhaps they will spare a man who makes no resistance. "Though a man has never so many ill words, yet "a deaf man will tire him at last." If I do not silence evil speaking by a virtuous life, I shall at least disarm it. Innocency is a very pleasant refuge to those who are persecuted. The less I shall have occasion to reprove myself, the less I shall be concerned to know what others say against me.

27. I have been told some troublesome truths, and yet I am not angry for it; because I told them to myself before. I observe my conduct so narrowly, that I must needs know my faults. Seeing I know my faults, and I hear they are known to others, what can I do better than to mend them?

28. N— bears me an ill will, he speaks ill of me, he endeavours to prejudice me; is it not because I have not a due regard for him? If we

w[illegible] do ourselves justice, we shall find we are seldom ill spoken of without a cause, and that few [illegible] will take delight in prejudicing and offending us on purpose; we do often give occasion to it.

30. M— spoke ill of me just now; I willingly forgive him; it was rather a sudden fit of vivacity than a malicious expression. Thus we must endeavour to justify those who speak ill of us, that we may be the less sensible of it.

30. I am told that somebody spoke ill of me; I am not at all surprised at it; for who can be secure from the darts of an ill tongue? It is certain that men are free to speak of the faults of others in their absence. Some do it out of malice, others without any ill design, and by way of conversation, nay, some will do it with an appearance of a good intention, but few will abstain from it. I should therefore make myself ridiculous, if I pretended to be the only man that shall be spared; it is certain that if I was angry with those discourses, I could never get out of them.

31. Those discourses are either true or altogether false; if they are true, were it not a horrible thing to be unconcerned for my faults when they are known to God, and to be vexed, because they are known to men! If they are false and ill grounded, the judgment of God, who justifies me, is sufficient to make me despise that of men. Why should it not have the same effect upon me, as approbation of my friends, and of those whom I esteem, which makes me slight what others can think or say of me? Oh! how sweet is it for me

to comfort myself in the justice of God, for the injustice which men can do me!

32. My silence has often contributed to stop the mouths of detracting men. When they saw that I was not concerned for their attacks, they did not care to attack me. Perhaps I should have exposed myself to a second injury, if I had shewed too great a resentment for the first.

REFLECTIONS

TO COMFORT ONE'S SELF IN A MEAN AND LOW CONDITION.

1. IF a great man despises me, I presently cast my eyes upon my small fortune, and I find that he is not altogether in the wrong, because he has learned, by the example of his courtiers, to undervalue and slight every thing that does not resemble his grandeur; afterwards I look upon myself, and I am willing to think that my want of merit is the ground of his contempt. I therefore endeavour to acquire what he ought to esteem; but perhaps he will not esteem me the more for it; it is no matter, I shall be the more perfect; which is as good as his esteem.

2. You are raised above me; you precede me by reason of your dignity, walk therefore before me in the way of perfection, shew me a good example; thus you will humble me in my low condition if I do not follow you.

3. To overcome the enemies of the state, and to overcome one's self; to make use of battles, in order to increase one's moderation and wisdom; to shew one's clemency and goodness in a victory; to take towns, and to win at the same time the heart of their inhabitants; to be equally dreaded and loved; to be altogether governed by reason and equity, and not by prejudices and opinions; to forgive others, without wanting to be forgiven; are things truly great, and worthy of the admiration of heaven and earth. I could easily comfort myself in my low and mean condition, if I saw many such great men.

4. Our true grandeur does not consist in depressing others, but in being great in ourselves, so that our elevation be not the effect of their lowliness. True grandeur is therefore in my power, and consequently it is my fault if I have it not; I must not therefore be afflicted for my lowliness, seeing it is in my power to get out of it.

5. I bring myself so low by the sentiments I have of myself, that it is impossible for any one to depress me more. The lowest step is the most steady and the most stable; the seat of constancy is placed there. Though proud and ambitious men abhor it never so much, yet if I be placed there, I shall not be uneasy at it, because I shall want nobody but myself.

6. I find myself very mean, when I consider myself, and meaner still, when I go out of myself, to consider so many great things which surround, and, as it were, absorb me. My meanness, which

is so well known to me, makes me familiar with humility, and being endowed with humility, I am very willing to use myself to my low condition.

7. I do not believe that there is any body who esteems me less than I do; it is commonly said that men do not know themselves; but I dare say that I am an exception to it; I know myself, and that knowledge is the reason why I humble myself more than any one can humble me. Sometimes I cannot endure myself, because of my great imperfections; but I hope that the aversion I have for my imperfection, will help me to get out of it.

8. Though I should flatter myself to be never so perfect, yet I should always find some reason to humble myself, by reflecting upon all the weaknesses which are common to me with all other men, and upon my particular imperfections. This being so, can any one depress me more than I do?

9. When I humble myself, I do it sincerely, without pretending to have a right to humble others, or to prevent being censured by them, or to avoid their advices and reprimands.

10. If any one will humble me, upon the account of my ignorance, he cannot tell me any thing about it, but what I am very sensible of; for I am persuaded that there is a world of things which I am ignorant of, and I do not value those which I know. What a ridiculous pride is that, which is only grounded upon a great reading and a good memory! This has been my learning for a long time, and it is also the learning of most of our learned men.

11. It is in vain for great men, who extend themselves in their imagination as much as ever they can, to look upon me as nothing, by reason of the little room which I take up in the world. I prevented them a great while ago by this reflection, when I spoke thus to myself:—What room do I take up during all eternity, in the midst of all the celestial globes, and amongst so many creatures? How few are those who know me! How few are those who think of me! How few are those over whom I have some power! What a vast number of men, who are more powerful, more learned, more rich and wiser than I am!—He who makes such reflections, may easily be an humble man.

12. If I have no interest with great men, by reason of my small fortune, all the better; I shall be less importuned by the solicitations of the little ones; I shall be less tempted to do unjust things; I shall less depend upon great men, and consequently less obliged to constrain myself, that I may please them, to flatter them, to make reports, to cringe, and to comply with all their passions.

13. What a sweet thing it is for me to enjoy a great tranquillity in my low and mean condition! As it is much better to sleep with a good health, in a small, low and narrow couch, than to be tormented with a sickness in a great bed, so it is better to be low in the world, with a contented mind, than to be great in it, and at the same time vexed with cares, as most great men are. I would not certainly embark in a great ship, well man-

ned, and loaded with gold and rich merchandizes, if I knew that it would sink; so I am not ambitious of living in a magnificent palace, wherein I must expect to be full of cares and troubles.

14. If I am uneasy in my low condition, I shall think only of making myself great; and if I will make myself great, I shall continually grow little; I shall subject myself to domineer over others; I shall submit to all sorts of slavery to get honours; lastly, I must stoop to raise myself; but if I must be low, I had as good be as I am.

15. The plainness of my goods is less troublesome to me, than if they were magnificent; I do not love a bed, which was made rather to serve ambition, than to sleep in; I do not consider so much the lustre of magnificence, as the trouble which it gives. "I am much for necessary things, "and not for a parade. They who live in great "state, are truly poor; they look up and down for "money with great trouble and uneasiness, to "afford new pleasures to others; and whilst they "make a show of their plenty, which strangers "enjoy more than themselves, they feel their indi-"gence in secret, with their wives and children, "by reason of the importunity of their creditors, "who vex them, and because of the ill state of "their affairs, which are almost ruined. We de-"fraud ourselves of useful things, to live according "to the common opinion." The sumptuosity of great men is chiefly owing to the admiration of the little ones.

16. Ambition will have a theatre, and therefore I am afraid of it; it does not permit a man to be in himself at home, and his own master. "Indeed "the votaries of ambition are very well rewarded, "to be always exposed to the publick view as a "statue in a market place. They cannot be "private in their very privy."

17. The great and little ones have commonly the same spirit and the same principles in their actions and enterprises; only with this difference, that great names are bestowed upon the actions of great men. "I find," says Montaigne, "that the "first seats are commonly taken by those who are "less intelligent, and that a great fortune is sel- "dom attended with great knowledge. I have "observed, that whilst some men were discoursing "at the upper end of a table, of the beauty of a "piece of hangings, or of the taste of malmsey, a "great many fine strokes were lost at the other "end of it. Grandeur and power are very much "desired by every body; the reason of it is, be- "cause what is good in them appears outwardly, "whereas the evil that is in them lies in the in- "side; besides, to command others, is looked "upon as a great, difficult, noble and godlike "thing; and therefore great men are esteemed and "reverenced as if they were more than men. Such "an opinion is useful to make people respectful "and obedient, and to observe the publick peace. "But after all, they are men cast in the same "mould with others, and very often neither so "generous, nor so well qualified as many ordinary

"men; one would think that their actions, being "of great weight and importance, are also pro- "duced by weighty and important causes; but "there is no such thing, they are produced by the "same springs as those of ordinary people. The "same reason which makes us quarrel with our "neighbours will excite a war among princes; "the same reason which moves us to get a foot- "boy whipt, moves a king to ruin a whole prov- "ince; their actions proceed from the same incon- "siderable causes; but they have a greater power "than we; a fly and an elephant have the same "desires. Lastly, besides the passions, defects, "and natural infirmities, which they have in "common with the least of their adorers, they "have also frequently some vices and inconve- "niences, which grandeur and power bring along "with them, and which are peculiar to them." When I consider all those things, I am not at all afflicted, because I am so far from being a great man.

18. Being not desirous to be a great man, and being contented with the low condition I am in, I converse more willingly with my equals, than those that are above me. I am more inclined to keep company with those who receive me with open arms, than with those who turn their backs to me.

19. My reason neither yields nor submits before great men; I do only bow the knee. Too great a distrust of one's self produces a base fear, which, depriving our minds of their liberty and

assurance, makes our reasoning weak, our words trembling, and our actions faint. A man with such an apparent weakness, is looked upon as being truly weak, and consequently very contemptible. Heretofore I seemed to be very weak, when I appeared before great men; their elevation depressed me so low, the splendour which surrounds them dazzled me so much, that I was before them as if I had not been, that is, weak, obscure, and annihilated. But ever since I have shaken off the yoke of opinion, I respect them, because they are my superiors; I obey them, because they are my masters; I esteem them, if they have a personal merit; because it is a tribute which I ought to pay to virtue; because I do not annihilate myself out of a baseness unworthy of him, who knows things as they are in themselves.

20. If I seek the favour of great men, the credit of those that are powerful, a glorious reputation, noble employments and great riches; it will be the way to make myself a considerable man in this world, out of which I must go in a short time; but if I despise all those pretended advantages, it will be the way to settle myself happily in the other world, out of which I shall never go. I choose to despise them.

21. Has a great man a different sleep from mine, a different smelling, a different feeling, and a different sight? No; wherein therefore, do his pleasures surpass mine? In some outward differences, which are neither his, nor in him. "Kings "are of a worse condition than private men, in the

"very enjoyment of pleasures; because ease and "felicity take away the half sweet and half sour "taste, which we find in them. Do you think "that singing boys take great delight in musick? "Satiety makes it rather tedious to them. He, "who drinks before he is thirsty, can take no "great pleasure in drinking."

22. Is a man greater, when he is in possession of a considerable dignity, when he has obtained a noble employment, when he has purchased a vast estate? In order to answer that question, I consider whether I should be greater if I was placed upon a gold and silver mountain, and whether I should be taller, if I lodged in one of the highest towers in the world.

23. All the true and necessary conveniences which princes enjoy, are common to them with their subjects. Will a man be better served by a duke, than by an ordinary servant?

24. I have no hand in those great events, which attract the eyes and admiration of the people; but because I do not admire them, I do not desire at all to have any hand in them, and I do very attentively consider what may be the causes of them, that I may not be troubled for having no hand in them. It is often necessary for the honour of the most considerable events, that their causes should be unknown. How inconsiderable are all those things in the eyes of God!

25. I am not at all ashamed to be humbled, but I am only ashamed to deserve that any body should humble me.

26. The great variety of tastes hinders me from being discouraged, in hopes that some will not reject with contempt what I say, and what I do. The same variety hinders me from growing proud, though I be never so well approved; because I fancy that some will censure what is approved by others.

27. They, who are in high places, must expect to be very much tossed; they are observed, controlled, examined and envied; they are subject to great stumblings, they hurt themselves much when they fall, and those falls are very frequent.

28. I esteem much more the lawful and reasonable ways to obtain great dignities, than the dignities themselves.

29. I am told sometimes, Why do you not court great men? What an insolence! I answer nothing; but they, who know me, answer for me, that the reason of it is, because I do not suffer myself to be governed by vanity and interest, to the prejudice of my tranquillity and happiness.

30. The only thing I am ambitious of, is to have a merit worthy of the grandeur, which is the object of other men's ambition. If I do not attain to grandeur, I shall think myself great enough, provided I deserve it.

31. To despise honours, dignities, and riches, is a sign of a great soul; I draw this consequence from that proposition; the possession of them is not therefore a sign of a great soul.

32. Though the fate of great men be never so different from that of the little ones, yet they have

the same origin and the same end as the little ones, and are subject to the same alterations and changes. The whole weight of their fortune is only supported by a weak and mortal life. They carry their grandeur, which is their treasure, in some vessel of clay, which, though painted and gilt over, is of a brittle matter. The great and little ones, the rich and poor, rot all alike. The light, though never so bright, if it be put out, leaves but an ill smell behind it; so great men, those great conquerors, who, like dreadful comets, have signalized themselves by the desolation of the world, leave nothing behind them but infection and rottenness. All the lustre of their grandeur is lost in the obscurity of their graves. It is true, that great men, who are not animated with the spirit of religion, make the sad ceremonies of their funerals the last refuge of their vanity, to keep themselves up after the fatal blow. They endeavour to fit their memory, that which death is going to take away from them; and gathering, as it were, the ruins of their glory in some pompous encomiums, stately mausoleums, and magnificent inscriptions, they make a kind of a charm of that funeral pomp, to remove from their minds the mortifying image of their sad destiny. How deplorable is the blindness of human pride, which fills men in a manner with their own emptiness; which turns the saddest warnings which God gives them in order to humble them, into the most dangerous illusions, wherewith they feed themselves; which endeavours to fix upon brass a transitory

grandeur, that passes away with so much rapidity; which places the remains of its power upon the unavoidable rock against which it splits, and endeavours to secure to itself a portion of a worldly life in the very empire of death itself!

33. There is nothing men are so careful to hide as pride; which shews that pride must needs be a very shameful vice. When I was governed by vanity, I should have been ashamed to appear so vain as I was. I am ashamed now that I suffered myself to be governed by a vice, which I should have been so ashamed to shew.

34. Ever since I endeavour to stifle my own pride, I do not complain of the pride of others; their vanity was insupportable to me; because I fancied, either that they had a mind to take away from me as much perfection, as they ascribed to themselves; or because the good opinion I had of myself, was incompatible with the despising way of vain and proud men.

35. The more I seem willing, in the low condition I am in, to raise myself above others, the more I shall exasperate them; and by exasperating them, I shall make them so many enemies to me, and they will endeavour to trouble, disquiet, afflict and destroy me. I will do what I can to be stronger than others, without intimating that I can think any body to be weaker than I am.

36. Be silent, pride, vanity, presumption! who, notwithstanding my mean and low condition, go about to persuade me that I am a man somewhat considerable in the world; how can I believe you

when I think that as soon as I depart this life, this same world will not perceive that I am gone out of it? So true it is, that I am very useless in it.

37. Grandeur shuns me; I am glad it prevents me; for it hath so many charms to inflame vanity, that I would shun it, if it did not shun me. A man who receives some honours, is very much tempted to think himself worthy of honour, so that he will often be contented with what he thinks to be, without endeavouring to become such as he is not.

38. If I look upon a great man afar off, he dazzles me, he prepossesses me in his favour, I admire him and his grandeur; but if I come near him, the personal defects, which I observe in him, do very much temper, with respect to me, the lustre he borrows from his rank and dignity.

39. A great man is more than one man in his own thoughts; he is a man surrounded with all those who belong to him, and he fancies that he has as many arms as all of them together; because he moves and disposes of them at his pleasure. I look upon him, therefore, as a man who can do a great deal by others; but if I separate others from him, I look upon him as another man.

40. I do not love to make a bustle in the world, and to converse much with great men; and therefore I am not at all mortified to find myself excluded from their company, by reason of my small fortune. I can be a solitary man when I am obliged to be amongst them; I withdraw my soul from the crowd; I always keep to myself a back room, which is altogether mine, to make it my chief re-

treat and refuge of tranquillity and true liberty. There I stand out of the way of the vulgar opinions of the world.

41. As I have no ambition, so I have no aversion for solitude; if I was ambitious, a retired life would be insupportable to me. In effect, how can one reconcile the glory which ambition seeks, with the repose which solitude requires?

42. I desire to be better pleased when I am at home, than when I am with great men, or somewhere else, and I am really better pleased at home. I have learned long enough to be alone. I do so much prefer a solitary life to the trouble of a publick one, that I had rather be always alone, than obliged to be always in company.

43. I do perfectly apprehend in a retired life, that it is a very great unhappiness for a man to be too well known to the world, and too much unknown to himself. No man can perfect himself without knowing himself; and one may be very imperfect, and at the same time very well known to others. I learn best to know myself in a quiet retreat; because I am no longer distracted by an infinity of objects, which I find in the world, which attract my eyes and all my reflections, without permitting me to reflect in the least upon myself. When I study myself, I know my misery, and therefore I humble myself; I know my weakness, and therefore I mistrust myself; I know that I cannot be satisfied with the possession of any creature, and therefore I raise myself above them, to lie in the bosom of the Creator, who alone can fill

up the capacity of my soul, and the extent of my desires.

44. Fortune has placed me in a very indifferent situation; but I like it so well, I am so well pleased with it, that one would think I placed myself in it with fortune's consent.

45. A retired life is very sweet to me, because I am not troubled with the tumult of affairs, wherewith the world is so much agitated. I am neither awaked nor importuned with the daily noise of so many people, who go about their business. I do not court those men who are called *great*, because they have a *great* train, a *great* equipage, a *great* table, *great* palaces; because one must take *great* pains to approach them, and *great* care to please them, and because after a service of a *great* many years, one must leave it with *great* contempt, *great* trouble, and *great* poverty.

46. What a pleasure is it to be in a place where one must always beware of being cheated and betrayed?

47. That which in my opinion makes quality appear dangerous, is, because that division, like the rest of the world, has a great many ill people in it, and because it is extremely difficult for those, who are obliged to converse with them, to forbear hating or imitating them. He who hates them, must expect to be persecuted by them; he, who imitates them, corrupts himself; two sad extremities indeed.

48. I have got such a habit of being alone, that I hate gaming, publick walks and all other such diversions; it makes me love study, it accustoms me to reflect upon myself, it renders me attentive to my duty and disposes me to discharge it.

49. Some men think to justify the eagerness, which they shew, to raise themselves in the world; when insulting those, who are contented with a mean fortune, they tell them that we are not made so much for ourselves as for the publick. I should believe them when they say so, were it not that I believe they acted by ambition.

50. I am not *great*, that is, I am none of those to whom one may say, "Do you think that a man "will open his heart to you, whilst your chamber "is always shut up to him? Can you expect any "true and sincere word from a man who dares not "tell you *good morrow?*" I am not *great*, that is, I am not covetous, nor I am not always exposed to the covetousness of others; so nobody can say of me what *Comines* says of the ill education of the great men of his time. "They have no tinc-"ture of learning; they are not under the care of "any one man: they have some governours, who "are acquainted with their affairs, but they them-"selves know nothing of them; I have often seen "their servants thrive by reason of their igno-"rance, and lead them by the nose; and if any "one of them happens by chance to inquire into "his own affairs, it is so late that it signifies but

"little." I am not *great*, that is, I receive no honours of men which makes me forget the honour I owe to GOD; I am not in danger of rejecting any other law of my will, besides my own will. I have not such a power as to commit a sin without any scruple, and without fearing to be punished for it. I am not *great*, that is, I am not always drunk with the sweet poison of flattery, and so I can taste the bitterness of truth; whereas, if I lived in grandeur, truth durst not approach me; great men must go and meet truth if they are desirous to know it; for nobody dares go and meet them, to shew it to them. How great a regard must one have for those who live in grandeur and plenty! The respect which the idea of grandeur imprints in the minds of men, stops the mouths of those who approach great men, and hinders them from telling them any truth which they might be offended at; nay, the best men are contented to pity them, without daring to reprove them. Every thing that raises men in the world, as riches, power, and authority, makes them every day more and more conceited of their own opinions, both because those things render others complaisant and credulous, and because they are less used to be contradicted, and therefore more nice and touchy. They are seldom told of their mistakes, and so they use themselves to think that they are never mistaken; and they are surprised when any one goes about to shew them that they are subject to mistakes as well as other men. Lastly, great men do seldom know the truth, but

by such persons as are no great lovers of it. Every degree of grandeur is an obstacle to truth; and whoever has a mind to raise himself higher in the world, must expect to be a greater stranger to truth.

51. I do not envy, but I deplore the fate of great men, who, being bound to discharge the duties of the station they are in; which exposes them to the publick view, are the slaves of those who obey them; who, being the only witnesses of their own cares and troubles, are in secret the victims of that false deity, which their courtiers adore in publick; who, finding no new thing in the purple, wherein they were born, feel at every moment the cares and sorrows which it covers; who, offering to our sight a mere phantom of felicity, have the thorns of their diadem thrust into their hearts, whilst they wear the flowers thereof upon their foreheads; and who, sighing sometimes after the happy obscurity of those who envy their grandeur, seem to have received the lustre and glory of it only for others, whilst they keep the whole weight thereof for themselves.

52. He, whom nobody minds, does not care for magnificence, or any other worldly vanity; it is the advantage of a small fortune. N— would not have such very fine furniture, nor so much *China* ware, and so many other superfluities, if he did not expect to see some men in his house, who will praise him for those trifles. As for me, I praise him only as much as I think he does personally deserve it.

53. It is as great wisdom for a man to resign an employment, when he knows that he is no longer fit for it, as to make himself worthy of it. I admired P— as much when he resigned the place which his great age had rendered him incapable of, as when he obtained it by his merit. What a noble science it is to know one's self well! What a noble courage to know how to yield! What a noble retreat, when it is made seasonably! A man is capable of all those noble things, when he has a real indifferency for worldly grandeurs.

54. Because I believe that my merit is as inconsiderable as my fortune, I do not love to shew myself too forward. I am so used to undervalue myself, that I fancy others have reason to despise me. When I perceive that I am useless, I retire before any body tells me I am so; why should I desire to be taken for another man, than I know myself to be? If I should resolve to stay, probably somebody would let me know that I am of no manner of use; and perhaps I should be obliged to make a shameful and a forced retreat, when I might have retired willingly and with honour. "It is a trouble to me to be troublesome to others."

55. Learning, a great capacity, noble projects, and glorious actions, whereby we are known to others, are often the cause why we do not know ourselves. We are then so taken up with outward things, that we do not know the secrets of our inward parts. I never descended into myself, but I found myself another man, than what I seemed to be outwardly.

56. It is not likely that I shall make my fortune at court, but I am not at all sorry for it; for I do not love to be uneasy; to depend entirely upon the will of other men; to speak at all times otherwise than I think; to court some persons who would be, perhaps, indifferent to me, and yet I must seem to love them; to praise what I do not esteem; to feed myself with hopes; to do a thousand useless services before one of them be liked; to live for others, and not for myself; to be a perfect slave to the passions of other men; to be governed by their humours, and to make all their cares and desires my own; to walk always with a mask on; to seem to desire what I do most abhor: in short, I do not love a place where one must rather know how to suffer bad actions, than how to do good ones; where calumny is always believed, and innocence seldom protected; and where a man is no less troubled with the fear of a fall, than he has been tormented with the desire of his elevation.

57. I do not find that great and rich men laugh oftener and more heartily than the poor and little ones; on the contrary, all things duly considered, I find that the joy of the latter is more complete and more frequent. Grandeur is always attended with great cares and sorrows, which seldom fail to disturb the pleasures of those who enjoy it.

58. The greatest men are in a manner the greatest slaves. A peasant has nothing to mind but his cottage and family; whereas a great man must mind his vast estate in land, his noble houses,

and a great number of domesticks and officers; so that he is a slave to his very slaves. An ordinary servant is enough to make him put off his journey, though he be never so much in haste.

59. I do not desire by any means to be one of those great men, who are, as it has been well observed, as so many slaves, though much more unhappy, because they fancy that they are free. The one applauds himself, because he is in the way of fortune, and seems to have some reason to hope for a considerable settlement. But what constraint is he under! he must continually have a watchful eye upon his concerns; make himself complaisant even to baseness; endure all the evils which commonly attend an uncertain fortune, and doubtful hopes; he must bear the open attacks of his enemies, the secret treacheries of those who envy him, the malicious jealousies of his equals, the sharp railleries of his superiors, the odd caprices of his masters; all those things he must bear, for an honour grounded upon opinion, for some inconstant favours, and for some perishable riches. It is true, that the authority which a noble employment gives, the respect it creates, the revenue it affords, the rank it procures, and the power it bestows of obliging one's friends, of raising one's relations, and of being revenged of one's enemies; all those things stir ambition, inflame cupidity, and are extremely pleasing to self love; this is the fair side of grandeur; these the most engaging things in it. But if I penetrate into the inside of these fair appearances, if I consider the

constraint, slavery, and constant attendance which such an employment requires, which destroys the health of the person who enjoys it, which keeps him at a distance from his relations, which hinders him from having any correspondence with them, which torments him with troubles and cares, that he may discharge his duty, remove envious men, satisfy his masters, and stand upon his guard against his enemies, and all that for a glory which soon passes away, for some imaginary honours, and for some perishable riches, which may soon fly away from him, or which he must leave in a little time; (for life is very short) I am so far from seeking such a grandeur, that I should be afraid to obtain it.

60. I confess that there are some great men who distinguish themselves, some by their courage and valour, others by their eloquence, by their knowledge of arts, and by a vast capacity; some by their politicks, by their noble projects, by their great skill in affairs, and by some heroical actions; but if we saw those great men in private, what weakness might we not find in them! what a ridiculous vanity! what a shameful jealousy! what niceness about trifles! what childishness! what meanness! which would make them blush, if they were known to the meanest of men!

61. I expect the *great man*, who despises me so much now, should not take it ill if that I make bold to compare myself with him at the hour of death.

REFLECTIONS

TO COMFORT ONE'S SELF IN A STATE OF DEPENDENCE AND SERVITUDE.

1. HE who obeys willingly, avoids that which is most intolerable in a state of servitude, I mean, to do any thing against his will. It is not at all an unhappy thing for me to be obliged to perform an act of obedience; but it would be an unhappy thing if I performed it against my will. What a madness it is to suffer one's self to be dragged rather than to follow! He, who will not be contented with the condition he is in, is his own tormentor.

2. I do willingly what I am to do, to make it easy to me, and to do it well; for what a man does against his will, is never so well done, as what he does out of inclination. Though a thing be never so easy, it becomes difficult, when it is done against one's will.

3. I am not at all desirous to command, therefore I find it less difficult to obey. He, that will command well, must know how to order, govern and direct others; how could I therefore command, seeing I have much ado to govern myself? I had rather follow than guide, go through a beaten road than find out a new one, and answer for myself only, than for others and myself too.

4. We preserve a kind of liberty, when we willingly obey those who may force us to it; a

man acts freely, when he does willingly what he does.

5. I submit to my superiors without any resistance, to acquit myself of what I owe to their authority; and if they have any merit, I esteem them also without any reluctancy, to acquit myself of what I owe to their virtue.

6. I find it pleasant and advantageous for me, to obey my masters and directors, because it seems to me to be so difficult to make a good choice, and to keep in the right way, that I think myself free from a great many cares, when any one, that is more knowing, shews me with authority what I am to do, and what I am not to do; I am then very willing to join the authority I ought to have over myself, to that of my directors.

7. There is one thing, amongst others, which makes me easy, when I am obliged to pay obedience; I mean, that I shall not be answerable for my actions, nor for their consequences.

8. Why should I refuse to obey, seeing obedience is so necessary to maintain society? If one man was not intrusted with the command, how many disorders would arise from the several passions and different interests of private men!

9. He who reasons too much about a command, does not obey as he ought to do. I obey, and I leave the care of making reflections to him who commands; it is his business, and not mine.

10. I know no servitude more shameful, than to serve one's own lusts, to be governed by one's passions, and carried away by opinion. "Who is

"it that deserves to be called a free man? The "wise man; he, who has the command of himself; "he, whom neither poverty, nor death, nor chains "can frighten; who can resist his passions, and "despise honours; who is altogether shut up "within himself; who is above all the attempts of "outward things; and who cannot be hurt by the "greatest blows of fortune." Though I be never so dependent, yet I am not to be pitied, if I preserve such a liberty.

11. I shall be always easy, notwithstanding the authority which others have over me, if I have the command of myself. With such a power, I shall care for nothing, I shall eagerly desire nothing but what deserves it, I shall be always at ease.

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE COMFORT OF THOSE OF A LOW EXTRACTION.

1. I HAD rather be known by some good actions, than by a noble birth. My good actions are my own work, but my noble birth is only the work of my parents. Marius expresses himself thus in Sallust: "I confess that I want the advantage of "a noble birth; but my actions afford me a "greater advantage; and they who upbraid me "with the meanness of my extraction, are guilty of "an extreme injustice, in not permitting me to

"value myself upon my own virtue, as much as "they value themselves upon the virtue of others."

2. Why should any body wonder to see some persons of the dregs of the people raise themselves and made noble? Why should they despise them? Have not the most illustrious families had the like beginning, if we go as far as their first origin? "A noble race, to speak the best of it, is that, "which being ignoble at first, was made noble in "length of time; an ignoble race is also that, the "nobleness whereof has been lost the same way." They who are nobly descended, think it a great honour to be able to shew that their nobility is very ancient; but though it be never so ancient, there is a certain time which is a *ne plus ultra* for them, beyond which they dare not go; because they would find at last a great deal of misery and meanness. The nearer men come to their first origin, the greater resemblance they find in their genealogies; and at last, when they are arrived there, they find no manner of difference among themselves, they are all equal. If you have some ancient titles, which prove that you are much above me by reason of your birth, I have some more ancient than yours, which prove that I am by my birth as great a man as you.

3. That which I esteem most in a noble extraction, is the strict obligation it lays upon noblemen, not to degenerate from the virtue of their ancestors.

4. Those coats of arms, those titles, all that outside of nobility, make those who have them better known than they are truly ennobled by

them. A nobleman is very much looked upon, but he is more despised when he does not keep up to his nobility; and it is no small matter for a man to keep up worthily his noble extraction. "The great lustre of your family does but keep "you from living a private life, and so deprives "you of the greatest pleasure you can enjoy, and "of the means of being your own master. What-"ever you do in private, will be the subject of "publick conversations; every body will be cu-"rious to know how you live at home; and one "would think that your ancestors had appointed "all your neighbours as so many spies, to observe "your actions, and to know whether you imitate "your predecessors." You will share in the glory of your ancestors according as you endeavour to be like them.

5. I esteem more those who begin the nobility of their families, than those *in whom*, and not *by whom* it is continued. I do not mind so much a man's name as his actions.

6. Nobility is like a cypher, which is worth nothing when alone, though it increases the value of numbers when added to them; nobility alone is not a merit in a man who boasts of it; it is another man's virtue which he usurps; an imaginary quality, wherewith he flatters himself; a sanctuary which he builds near his grave; and a borrowed light which he makes use of.

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE COMFORT OF THOSE WHO ARE SICK AND FULL OF PAIN.

1. I TAKE great care not to be too sensible of pleasures, lest I should be too sensible of pain.

2. If I suffer much, I must strive to be patient; either my pain will soon be over, or I shall die; violent pains seldom last long; the more violent they are, the more reason I have to believe they will soon be at an end.

3. The more timorous I am, the more my pains will be grievous to me. It is with pain as it is with an enemy; when we are afraid of him, we give him a greater courage.

4. When I am sick, or afflicted with any pain, I withdraw, as it were, to my soul, as much as I can, to converse with it, to delight in it, to divert it from its sufferings. It is certain, that if I do not lessen by that means the sense of my illness, I do not make it worse by it. The reason why we are so impatient in the sufferings of our bodies, is because we do not use ourselves to delight in our souls.

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE COMFORT OF THOSE WHO LOSE THEIR ESTATES, THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

1. THOUGH a man be never so rich, his mind may be tormented with sorrows, and his body with sickness; why should I be therefore so much afflicted for the loss of my riches, seeing they cannot preserve me from those evils?

2. That I may not be troubled for what I have lost, I rejoice for what is left me; and if there is nothing left me, but what is common with all men, I am contented with it. For I will not be often tormenting myself, and therefore I will not add grief, impatience and despair to the loss I have sustained.

3. I look upon all the good things of the world which we enjoy, as so many borrowed things, wherefore if they are taken from me, I fancy that I restore them, instead of losing them; I was persuaded that they would not remain with me always; I had already given them up by my indifferency, before they left me out of necessity.

4. If I have a suit in law, I inform my judges, without endeavouring to surprise them; I solicit them without desiring that they should be unjust; if they give judgment for me, I use it without any hardship or revenge; if they give judgment against me, I submit to it without murmuring.

5. When I lose my friends and relations, I give to nature, gratitude, and friendship, what they require of me; and afterwards I endeavour to give to reason what time would not fail to obtain. I do not make an end of my tears out of weariness, but out of reflection, being not willing that time should have the honour to wipe them off.

6. I shall soon follow those whom death has ravished from me; I am upon the same journey with them; they did only set out a little sooner than I; I knew very well that we should part some time or other.

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE COMFORT OF THOSE WHO ARE OBLIGED TO WORK.

1. IF I get a habit of working, the most difficult things will become easy to me; nay, I am thereby disposed to be patient in my labour.

2. I am willing to work more than I need, that I may be fitter to do what is necessary. It is a good thing to keep one's self employed; for too much rest makes one heavy and weak.

3.-When I have nothing to do, that I may not be idle, I reflect upon what I have done, or what I must do. I am always afraid if my mind grows slack, I shall grow slack in my duty. Too great an idleness makes a little work intolerable. He who does nothing will learn to do ill things. Idle-

ness is not so much a particular vice as a general occasion for all sorts of vices.

4. Most of those who hate working, feel at last the inconveniences of poverty. An idle man spends what he has, and gets nothing; he is a prey to several pleasures, which cost him very dear; and wants courage and resolution to mind his own concerns.

5. Some men make themselves ridiculous by applying themselves to such things as have no manner of relation with their profession; because the publick is persuaded that they neither do nor can excel in them. I would never advise a clergyman to write a book about military discipline, nor an engineer to write a commentary upon St. Paul's epistles. I shall sooner believe a civilian, when he explains to me the difficulties of the digests, than when he undertakes to demonstrate to me the quadrature of the circle. I shall be more willing to follow the advice of a physician about the use of simples, the properties whereof he ought to know by his profession, than his instructions to free me from the tricks of an attorney. Nevertheless, men are commonly tempted to go out of their sphere under pretence of doing more good; and they have much ado to keep within the bounds of their profession. They who are destinated to a solitary life, will return into the world under pretence of charity; instead of minding their own salvation, they go about to shew that they are able to promote the salvation of others; and so entangling themselves by degrees

in the affairs and intrigues of the world, whilst they think to save the souls of other men, they endanger their own. Others, whose business it is to live an active life, and serve their neighbours, will unseasonably set up for contemplative men, and leave off some necessary practices for some useless reflections. Thus a magistrate, under pretence of piety, becomes often morose and inaccessible to those who stand in need of his help; and being taken up with unseasonable prayers, which God does not require of him, tires the patience of unhappy men, (whom God commands to hear favourably) by deferring the justice which he ought to do them. How many women, who spend in works of supererogation the time which they should spend in the performance of essential duties; and who, whilst they go from church to church, and from one director to another, and are always ready to perform all the devotional practices which are prescribed to them, neglect that which is proper for them, and which God requires of them above all others; I mean, to give a good education to their children, and to take care of their families. I seldom undertake any thing but what I am fit for; and when I am forced to the contrary, I use attention, reflection, great care, and exactness, and the advices of the most knowing men, that I may discharge my duty as well as I can.

REFLECTIONS

UPON FEAR.

1. I GIVE way as little as I can to the fear of certain, or uncertain events; I am contented to strengthen myself by my reflections against those which it is impossible for me to avoid; and to secure myself by prudence from those which are not so certain, as the grief caused by fear would be certain. Most things do rather fright than hurt us. "Fear is the greatest and most "troublesome of all evils; for other evils are only "evils as long as they last, and the trouble thereof "is of no longer duration than their cause; but "men fear what is, and what is not, and what "perhaps will never be, and even sometimes what "cannot be." He who fears to suffer, suffers already what he fears. There are no evils but what are finite, and have certain bounds; fear is the only unlimited evil. "Poor men, how many "voluntary evils do you suffer, besides the neces- "sary ones, which nature brings upon you! Fear "commonly proceeds from dangers, and does often "expose us to dangers; for it begets an inconsid- "erate desire of getting out of them, and so aston- "ishes, troubles and hinders us from taking the "right way to get out of them; it causes a violent "trouble, wherewith the soul, being frighted, "retires within itself, and struggles, not knowing "how to avoid the present danger. Besides the

"great discouragement it produces, it strikes us "with such an amazement, that we lose our wits "and speech, and it makes us run away, though "nobody pursues us, and even from our friends "who come to our help."

2. I should be always an unhappy man, did I fear every thing that may hurt me. I desire only to be prudent with respect to such things as may happen, and resolute with respect to those that happen. "What does it avail you; will it pre-"vent your ill fortune, to lose the present good "by fear of what is to come, and to be unhappy "from this very moment, because you will be so "in time?"

3. Is it necessary that I should prevent evils, to hasten a grief which I shall fear soon enough when it comes, and to spoil the enjoyment of the present by the fear of what is to come? "Men "must needs have a great mind to be unhappy, "seeing they will not stay for evils until they "come, but will go and fetch them, and hasten "their coming, as those who kill themselves for "fear of dying; I mean, that they foresee evils "and inconveniences out of curiosity and weak-"ness, out of a vain apprehension, and expect "them with great trouble and uneasiness, even "those which perhaps will never touch them. "Those men have a mind to make themselves "miserable by a real sense of misery, and a long "thinking upon it beforehand, which is often a "hundred times worse than the evil itself." He who makes himself miserable now, because he

may perhaps be so one day, must needs be an enemy to himself. "They who are afraid of "losing their estates, of being banished, or sub-"dued, live in a continual anguish, and can nei-"ther eat, nor drink, nor sleep in peace; whereas "the poor, they that are banished, and slaves, are "often as cheerful as others. Alas! poor man! "Thou art subject to so many certain inconve-"niences, that thou needest not increase them by "thy invention; and thou art naturally miserable "enough, without being so by art; thou hast so "many real troubles, that there is no need for thee "to form imaginary ones."

4. Of all the uncertain things which I fear, the most apparent is not so certain, as it is certain that I did not fall into all the dangers which I have feared.

5. I am not so surprised wi h the merit of other men, as to tremble with fear in their presence; for though we be never so much prepossessed in favour of a man of great reputation; we need not know him long, to find out that one must abate a great deal of the exaggerations of fame, and that every body has his weak side, which brings him as near the vulgar, as he is above it by his merit.

REFLECTIONS

FOR THE COMFORT OF THOSE WHO ARE IN POVERTY.

1. MEN are so fond and so greedy of riches, that one dares not speak boldly in favour of poverty. It is true, that riches procure us a great many conveniences; but it is as true likewise, that they never make us happy, and that they are contrary to our happiness, because they do commonly deprive us of our tranquillity. But we may enjoy that tranquillity in a great measure, if we know how to bear patiently our poverty; we must at least endeavour to do it, when we are destitute of riches, and have no reason to hope for them.

2. The less I desire, the less I shall find my poverty intolerable. Men are poor, not so much because they have but little, as because they desire more than they have; wherefore I do not think so much of increasing what I possess, as I think of moderating my desires. "How miserable "is a man who glories in keeping a large register "of his yearly revenues, in getting vast fields "ploughed by his slaves, in having innumerable "flocks, in being attended with an army of ser-"vants, and in walking in his palace, the extent "whereof looks more like a town than a private "man's house. When he has well considered all "his riches, he will confess he is poor, if he com-

"pares what he desires with what he enjoys." Though fortune should take away nothing from a man greedy of riches, yet he will always reckon among his losses what he cannot acquire; and consequently, though he loses nothing, he will be as much afflicted as if he lost a great deal. He wishes for what he has not, and does not enjoy what he has; he is no less sensible to imaginary than to real losses. It is a great mistake to fancy that rich men bear their losses with more courage and resolution than the poor; a tall man is as sensible of the pain of a wound as a little one. They, who have a fine head of hair, can no more bear to have it plucked off, than they that have but little on their head. I have reason to believe that if it be a good thing to enjoy what one desires, it is no less a good thing to desire only what one enjoys. Let us therefore be careful to conform our desires to our fortune; for if we permit them to go farther, they will carry us into some imaginary spaces, where we shall find no rest, for want of solidity. I shall be rich in some measure, if I do not care to be so.

3. I have riches enough if I measure them by the wants of nature. It requires that I should feel neither hunger, nor thirst, nor cold; and the habit of education requires, that I should be clothed, lodged, &c. I have, I thank God, wherewith to supply all those wants, in a plain way only; but it is enough for me, who always looked upon superfluities, as so many occasions of trouble and uneasiness; because they cannot be got with-

out many cares. A man may satisfy his hunger for a small matter, but he must pay dear to satisfy his daintiness, and it is the same with other excesses. Nature desires nothing but what may be found every where; men torment themselves most to get superfluous things; that which was superfluous at first, becomes so necessary in time, that one cannot be easy without it. We never know how many superfluous things there are, but when they begin to fail us; for we used them, not because they were necessary to us, but because we had them. How many things did we make use of, because others made use of them! One of the greatest causes of our evil is, that we follow the example of others, and will not be governed by reason, but by opinion and custom. As soon as an error is become publick, it becomes a virtue to us. "All the provisions in the world could not "satisfy me, if I was extremely desirous of super-"fluous things. A poor man does not want so "many things to live a quiet and easy life, as a "rich man to live a magnificent one. Let us "therefore regulate our desires according to our "necessity. Nature has set some bounds to our "desires; and were it not better for us to look for "those bounds, that we might know what it does "or does not require, and that we might learn by "that means to distinguish useless and superfluous "things from those that are useful and necessary? "When you are tormented with thirst, must you "have a golden cup to drink in? And when you "are almost starved with hunger, could you relish

"no other meat besides a peacock and a turbot?
"Why do you cross the sea, and run all over the
"world? said a barbarian of Brazil to some trav-
"ellers who went over the sea to seek riches. Is
"your country so poor that it cannot afford you
"wherewithal to live? Will great riches make
"you more acceptable to God? Will they keep
"you from dying? If you tell me that you are
"glad to leave them to your children, seeing the
"earth is sufficient to maintain you and your
"parents, will it not be sufficient for your children
"and your posterity?"

4. If you are poor, you will not be loaded with so heavy a weight; you will be less troubled with fear. If we reflect well upon the inconstancy of fortune, we shall find that rich men have reason to fear, and that the poor have reason to hope.

5. My poverty does not make me blush at all; nothing but vices can make me ashamed of myself; if I was ashamed of my poverty, it is very likely that I should be proud if I was rich. If I was poor by my fault, I should not be ashamed of my poverty, but of the fault which made me poor. It is true that rich men slight and despise those who are poor and indigent in comparison of them; but to make amends for such an ill treatment, I will endeavour to enrich my mind with the most necessary sciences, my soul with virtues, and my heart with generosity and constancy; that I may know by my study and reflections, wherein the supreme good consists, and procure it to myself, and that I may be enabled, by my courage and

firmness, to resist every thing that might hinder me from acquiring and enjoying it. With such a knowledge, I shall not be a base man, to please those that are rich; because I shall be able to know what difference there is between their false goods and the true one. With such a virtue, I shall think myself more happy than they, if they do not do so well as I do. With such a courage and generosity, I shall not basely tremble in their presence, as a man dazzled by the lustre of their riches, and fearful by reason of their pride and haughtiness; for it is but too true that poverty makes a man timorous, and that the timorousness of the poor renders them very often contemptible in the eyes of rich men. When a poor man speaks to a rich man, he seems to have so shallow and so narrow a wit, that every body pities him. Yet there are many poor men, who have a great deal of sense, and a vast genius; but how comes it then that such a poor man seems to reason so ill? It is because he is in the presence of a rich man, on whom he depends, and whose favours he expects; he had rather appear incapable of reasoning well, that he may easily obtain wherewithal to supply his wants, than contradict that rich man with some strong and judicious arguments, whereby he might be in danger of making an enemy of him instead of a benefactor. There is nothing more common than such a timorous behaviour of the poor towards the rich; which moved Monsieur de la Brayere to give us so natural and resembling a character of the suffering, timorous, and bashful

poor man, in these words:—Phedon has hollow eyes, a pale complexion, a thin body, and a lean face; he sleeps little, and his sleep is not very sound; he is thoughtful and distracted; and though he has a great deal of wit, he looks like a stupid man; he forgets to say what he knows, or to mention such matters of fact as are known to him; and if he does it sometimes, it is but poorly; he is afraid of being troublesome to those he speaks to; he discourses briefly, but coldly; he is not minded; he makes nobody laugh; he praises others, and smiles when they speak to him; he is of their mind; he runs, he flies to do them some small services; he is complaisant, flattering, and very officious; he is mysterious about his affairs, and sometimes he lies; he is superstitious, scrupulous, and timorous; he walks softly and lightly; one would think he is afraid to touch the ground; he walks looking downwards, and he dares not lift up his eyes to look upon those who go by; he is never one of those who sit round and discourse together; he stands behind the person who speaks; he picks up by stealth what he hears, and retires if any body looks upon him; he fills no place; he takes up no room; he sneaks away with his hat hanging over his eyes, that he may not be seen; he muffles up himself in his cloak; there are no streets nor galleries, though never so incumbered and full of people, but he goes through them without struggling, and slips away without being seen; if he desired to sit down, he has much ado to place himself upon the edge of a seat; he

speaks low in conversation, and does not pronounce his words distinctly, and yet he is free about the publick affairs, angry with the present time, and not much prepossessed in favour of the ministers and ministry; he never opens his mouth but to answer; he coughs, he wipes his nose in his hat, he spits upon his clothes, and he puts off sneezing till he is alone; or if he sneezes, the company does not perceive it; nobody puts off his hat to him; nobody makes him a compliment; *he is poor.*

6. If I was a very rich man, my riches would not put an end to my miseries; they would only change the nature of them; I should be enabled to enjoy many pleasures, but at the same time they would occasion a great many cares. Men are desirous of riches that they may live a pleasant life; they expose their health and their lives to acquire them; and at last, when they have them, they live an uneasy life to preserve and increase them. We see every day that a poor man laughs more frequently and more heartily than a rich one; the reason of it is, because the former does frequently enjoy the little he has, whereas the latter desires with great uneasiness what he has not. Rich men are commonly more troubled with the desire of getting what they have not, than they are pleased with what they have.

7. Suppose I had many fine houses, and many rows of apartment, I shall not have many bodies for all that, I shall have but one; I could not buy another, though I was worth several millions;

having therefore but one body, do I want so many houses, so many chambers, so many beds, so many tables, and so many servants? Though our riches increase never so much, our senses will not increase to enjoy them; on the contrary, they will lessen every day.

8. If men set a great value upon riches, it is certain that they are very inconsiderate in the eyes of God, seeing he does not always bestow them plentifully upon good men; but on the contrary, wicked men have the greatest share of them. "We must not, therefore, be so fond of the "riches of this world, which are neither good, nor "can make a man good, which are commonly in "the hands of the most wicked men, which do of- "ten corrupt good manners, and never mend ill "ones, without which so many wise men have liv- "ed a happy life, and by reason of which many "wicked men have been unhappy." We may be easily convinced that riches are dangerous. They animate all the passions of men, they discover their bad inclinations though they lie never so hid, and they excite their propensity to evil, because they enable them to do it easily. They put voluptuous men in a capacity of satisfying their senses, by relishing the most unlawful pleasures, and the most sensual delicacies; they move ambitious men to trample upon those whom they meet in their way, by procuring to themselves the honours which their pride made them so fond of; they enable revengeful men to buy the means of pouring the bitterness of their anger upon their

enemies, and of making them feel the most cruel effects of their hatred and aversion; by their help idle and lazy men indulge themselves in softness and indolence, which commonly arise from idleness; the very hypocrites know how to make use of them to produce outwardly some shining good works, which have no merit in themselves, because they are destitute of a right intention, and done only to obtain the praises and approbation of the spectators. Lastly, one may very often say of riches, that they have been heaped up out of a sordid interest, and afterwards scattered out of luxury, or kept out of avarice, or squandered away out of imprudence, or lost by gaming, or consumed to satisfy one's lust. As to the religion of those who are passionately fond of them, it may be said, that, if they have any, it is a sacrilegious religion, which they formed out of their avarice. If a covetous man has any faith, it is an impious one, because he reposes an entire confidence in his covetousness, and is altogether governed by its maxims; if he has any hope, it is an unlawful one; because he places his supreme good in the riches which his covetousness moves him to acquire; if he has any charity, it is an abominable one, because he loves all those perishable things (which his covetousness prompts him to seek) more than God and all the heavenly riches, which he offers to him; if he has any fortitude, it is only to endure the toils and labours, which his covetousness puts him upon; if he has any prudence, it is only to avoid the losses, which

his covetousness makes him afraid of; if he has any temperance, it is only not to run into any excess, that may considerably lessen his silver and gold, which his covetousness made him hoard up with so much trouble and so many cares; if he has any justice, it is only when it may be consistent with his interest, from which his covetousness never permits him to depart; he fasts, I own it, but his covetousness makes him sober; he deprives himself of his ease and his conveniences; but his covetousness is the only cause of his mortification; he endures the injuries of weather, and other inconveniences; but his covetousness hardens him; he abhors some unlawful pleasures; but his covetousness is the only reason of the purity of his life. Lastly, he is continually agitated, and full of jealousy and distrust; his covetousness makes him foresee nothing, but burning of houses, plunderings of soldiers, years of scarcity and famine, downfalls of fortune, and other visionary and frightful fancies of misfortunes, and under such a dreadful prospect, and such a panick fear, what will he not do to stuff his coffers and increase his stores? Nobody knows the publick misery better than he, and yet nobody will be less concerned for it than he. We have seen what too great a desire of riches will do; which is sufficient to make us afraid of them.

9. I should be very desirous and fond of riches, if I could buy happiness with them; but before we desire a thing, and are eager to obtain it, it is very fit to examine the happiness of those who enjoy it. All that has been said before, is a kind

of an examination of it; from whence one may conclude, that rich men are never happy; they seem to others to be happy; but they do not seem so to themselves. Every body thinks and speaks the same; and I see no rich man who affirms that there is no reason to think and speak so.

10. Every body sees the heavens, the sun, the stars, and all the other shining beauties of nature; but N. does not value them, because they are common. He must have palaces, magnificent goods, and gilt ceilings; is he happy with them? I say, no; for others have finer ceilings, more sumptuous goods, and more stately palaces than he; it is not the reality of those objects which pleases him; but he is pleased, because he fancies to have what others have not.

11. There are a great many things, which I may be without, seeing I am never the worse for being without them out of necessity. Our desires of getting riches make them more valuable, than we find them to be, when our desires are satisfied; as if they were less to be esteemed in themselves, than by the eagerness we express for them.

12. Though I despise riches never so much, yet I do not despise those who are in possession of them. N. shews some indifferency for riches, he says that no man ought to be fond of them; and yet he is a rich man; but I do not blame him for that; I should blame him, if he could not be without his riches; if he could not be contented without them; if he made no good use of them, if he was proud of them. A man is not to blame be-

cause he lives in a palace, but because he cannot be contented with one room; not because he has a dignity, but because he is ambitious of it. "A "wise man does not love riches, but he had rather "have them than ask for them. He does not "receive them in his soul, but only in his house; "he does not refuse to enjoy them, but on the con- "trary, he keeps them as a thing, *which may* "*enable him to shew* his virtue. In effect, a wise "man has more occasion to shew his generosity, "if he be rich, than if he be poor. All the virtue "a poor man is capable of, is to keep his courage "without suffering himself to be cast down; but "all virtues appear among riches, temperance, "liberality and good order; it is a great matter to "abound with riches, without being corrupted by "them. It is a glorious thing to live like a poor "man in the midst of them; but there is less danger "in being without them." If I had rather be rich than poor, it were because there are more miserable men, who would be the better for my liberality, than there are wise men, who would be the better for my patience.

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE FEAR OF DEATH.

1. WHEN we do often think of death, we make it familiar to us, and are less afraid of it. I know no meditation, that is so necessary to me,

as to meditate upon death; because of all the subjects upon which one can meditate, there is none more sure and more certain. "Let us there-"fore think always of death; let us represent it "to our imagination at every moment, and with "all its several faces; at the stumbling of a horse, "at the fall of a tile, at the least pricking of a pin; "I fancy at every minute that I am making my "escape, and I repeat over and over again, that "what may happen another day, may as well "happen to-day. No man was ever better pre-"pared for death than I am." It will be said that a man may easily take such resolutions when he sees death afar off; but that he does not show the same courage when it is near: "That it may "be a sham; that we make those fine philosophi-"cal discourses only to keep a good countenance; "that the accidents of this life do not affect us so "much as to make us appear such as we are; but "that when death shows its face, we can no longer "counterfeit ourselves; that we must then speak "out, and that instead of showing a good courage, "we show nothing but weakness and fear. It "seems that fortune does sometimes watch the last "day of our lives, to show her power of over-"throwing in one day what she has been building "many years, and to make us exclaim in these "words, as Laberius did, *I have lived one day more "than I should have done.*" All those things may very well be; nevertheless, it cannot be denied but that it is a useful thing to meditate upon death; and though it were of no use then, yet it helps us

to go thus far without trouble and fear, which is no inconsiderable thing.

2. When I leave this world, I shall be free from a great deal of trouble and uneasiness, and from a great many cares, torments and dangers. Why should I be so much afraid of that which frees me from so many evils?

3. Death is the condition of life; I came into this world upon condition that I should go out of it; I never lose the sight of that obligation, that I may not be surprised and amazed when I am obliged to discharge it. I shall pay without murmuring the tribute which I owe to human nature.

4. I need not take great pains to think of death; my very life does continually represent it to my imagination; I see that I am going to it every day by degrees; all the moments of my life tend to death; the last will at length come to it.

5. Why should I be afraid of dying? Will my fear make death uncertain? Can I doubt of the certainty of it? Can I be so unreasonable as not to submit to a thing that is unavoidable? Virtue is necessary, not to fear uncertain things; but, as for those which are infallible, common sense is sufficient to prepare us for them; for after all, I shall certainly die; I must therefore expect it. Though my apprehensions be never so great, it will be of no use to me to prevent that unavoidable blow. All my fears will prove only so many wounds before I feel what is the cause of them. "A foolish man is afraid of death; a mad man

"seeks it, but a wise man expects it, without being "afraid of it."

6. If men suffer much when they die, it is certain that their pains are soon over; for great pains do not last long; though they be never so great, we do certainly feel greater and more lasting ones during this life, which we are so unwilling to leave. The pains of death, whatever they be, will free me from all others. What! shall I make myself unhappy during so many years, for a thing which will make me suffer but one moment? Shall I be afraid so long, of a thing which will at last free me from all my fears? But what reason have I to believe that death is attended with such great sufferings? Do I know what it is? Perhaps it is more pleasant than painful: Swoons, which are the most lively image of it, give me some reason to believe it, when I consider their pleasing insensibility. Sleep, which is another representation of it, teaches me the same thing; at least, I cannot affirm the contrary, seeing I do not know it neither by my own experience, nor by the experience of others.

7. I shall die, that is, I shall go whither all things go; for we all go thither, some sooner, some later; but at last, we must all come there. Can I fancy that I shall never come to a place, whither I am continually going? All those who went before me, arrived there; and all those, who shall come after me, will arrive there; the great and little ones; the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the learned, young and old, fools and wise

men, all run in the same career, and will stop at the same goal; how many people will die at the same time with me!

8. I think of death in the midst of pleasures; and therefore I do not give up myself to their charms. I think of death in the midst of my sufferings; and therefore I do not fall into despair. I do not know where death will take hold of me, I will therefore expect it every where; I do not know at what hour, I will therefore expect it at all times. "I am not," says Montaigne, "naturally melancholy, but I am a very thoughtful "man; I make death at all times the chief subject "of my meditations, even in the most licentious "part of my life, amongst the ladies, and in the "midst of my sports; whilst the company thought "that jealousy or the uncertainty of my hopes, "made me pensive and uneasy, I was thinking of "a certain person who died some few days before "of a fever, which he got at his going away from "a like entertainment, having his head full of "love and mirth as well as I, and that the same "fate might as well attend me; I was thinking so "all the while without putting on a frowning "countenance. It is true, that such thoughts will "at first give us some trouble; but time and a long "use will make them familiar to us." I carry my meditations upon death farther still than Montaigne; for I do often fancy that I am a dying, or that I am dead. I fancy that I am in my death bed, given over by the physician, and surrounded with my friends and relations, who are weeping

over me. I fall a raving, I do not know what I say, and at last I lose my reason; my feet and my legs stretch themselves, grow stiff, and remain without heat and motion; my face changes pale, and shrinks; my eyes sink in my head, and are ghastly; my teeth blacken; my tongue thickens and stutters; my mouth rottens with a canker; my throat rattles; all my members grow cold and insensible; at last, I end my life with a hiccup, a gaping, and a grimace, which causes as great an horrour to the spectators, as it makes them shed tears and fetch sighs; I end my life as a vapour which exhales; as some spirits which are exhausted; as a machine which breaks and falls to pieces. As soon as I have given up the ghost, they lay my body upon straw, they wrap it up in a cloth, they shut it up in a coffin, they carry it to the grave, and they cover it with earth. A dead body never begs a grave. The horrour which surrounds me forces the living, and even my relations and my best friends, to part with me as soon as ever they can. Every body goes away from me, every body leaves me, every body abandons me, except some poor servants, or at best some charitable persons will stay by me, and pay their last duty to me, till I am carried out of my chamber, whither I shall never come again. This is what I expect every day. No man did ever less rely upon his life than I, even in my most flourishing youth; and therefore I believe that few men are as indifferent for the good things of this world as I am. Alas! why do we take so

much pains to get what we cannot enjoy but a little while? If men were to live forever upon earth, I believe they would not give themselves more trouble than they do to get estates. As for me, I think of it rather to follow the example of others, than out of reason; the shortness of human life makes me so indifferent for every thing that goes by the name of great fortune, that I could live from hand to mouth, if such a judicious indifferency was not despised and looked upon, as a kind of indolence and laziness. If the question is about honours, riches, or pleasures, I shall carry away none of those riches, and those honours will not hinder me fr. m being reduced to a very low and mortifying state; I mean the grave. I have sustained some losses, I am not troubled for them, for I shall die; death would have infallibly taken away from me what I have lost by the injustice of others. Thus reflecting often upon the last part of my life, I am not troubled for the loss of any perishable things, because I cannot be very fond of them.

9. If I seem to be too much afraid of departing this life, I shall deprive myself of such helps as may enable me to die a happy death. In effect, is there any body so bold as to tell a sick man, who seems to be afraid of death, that it is near at hand? Who dares to prepare him for it? On the contrary, great care is taken to remove from him every thing that may give him the least suspicion of it; his wife uses all imaginary precautions to dissuade those who seem to be zealous

enough to give him notice of it; his children prevail upon the physicians to make them promise him that they will cure him, though they have given him over; his friends assure him that he is in no danger, immediately after they have been told in his antichamber, that he cannot live two hours; his servants, to confirm him in the same hopes, shew a cheerful countenance, having a little before wiped off the tears which his approaching death made them shed. Lastly, nobody dares tell him that he is a mortal man, even when he is a dying, and the divines are never sent for to exhort him to acknowledge his sins, and repent of them, but when he has almost lost his senses and his knowledge!

10. If I was too apprehensive of death, I should certainly wish that it would quickly take hold of me, to free me from that trouble; I had rather suffer one death by dying, than to fear them all by living; I had rather die once, than be so often afraid of dying; seeing we are threatened with so many sorts of death, is it not a worse thing to fear them all, than to endure one? When we fear death, we fear every thing, because every thing may be the occasion of it.

11. If I am sorry to lose my life before I die, I shall not be sorry for having lost it when I am dead; how many reasons ought to make me unconcerned for the loss of it, even before I lose it!

12. The last hour of my life is not the last hour of my soul, it is only the last hour of my body. I look upon all the things that are about me, as the

goods of an inn wherein I do but lodge in my journey, and which I am to leave the next day. Nature searches all who go out of this world, as well as those who come into it; it will not permit me to carry out of it more than I have brought into it; on the contrary, it will strip me of my very body. That day, which every body looks upon as the last day of my life, will be a birth day for me, to let me into eternity. Death will not be the last moment of my true life, but only the last moment of my mortal life; the death which I expect, will be the beginning of another life, over which death shall have no power. Seeing religion teaches me that I shall enjoy in the next world so many infinite and eternal good things, shall I be so unreasonable as to be afraid of going out of this world, wherein I have only imaginary goods, and true and real evils? In effect, what is this world which we are so afraid to leave? This world is a compound of vanity and falsehood; its pleasures are deceitful amusements; its caresses are treasons; its riches are things of no duration, by reason of their uncertainty; its felicities are mere shadows and phantoms of happiness, which amuse and cheat us, and will frequently end with a real unhappiness. This world is a crowd of different figures, which offer themselves to our eyes, and then vanish away; a revolution of conditions and fortunes, which begin and have an end, which rise and fall again; a vicissitude of hidden or visible corruptions. When this world flatters us with the hopes of liberty, we find nothing in it

but trouble and slavery; when it flatters us with the hopes of peace and quietness, we find nothing in it but vexation and uneasiness; when it flatters us with the hopes of joy, we find nothing in it but bitterness. Its most tender friendships have an end; its honours are only some specious titles, which time deface; its pleasures are mere amusements, which leave frequently behind them long and dismal sorrows; its grandeurs fall of themselves; its glory and reputation will be lost in time in the abyss of an eternal oblivion; there is nothing in all its creatures, that can make us happy; because there is nothing in them that can fill up the capacity of our hearts; they are too little in themselves, and the power is too weak; it is true, that their beauty strikes our eyes; their sweetness pleases our taste; their riches adorn our bodies; but none of them can fully satisfy our minds; they may indeed take up and incumber our hearts, but they can neither satisfy nor fill them up; because they are only false goods, illusions, and shadows, or rather real evils, which make a man worse, and do not keep him from being unhappy. The most glittering fortune is not only vain and inconstant, but also troublesome, and full of bitterness and sorrows; a man may sigh and be uneasy upon a throne, as well as in irons. Virtue does continually suffer shipwreck in this world; sincerity is not safe; piety dares not shew its head; humility blushes and is ashamed; chastity is continually assaulted; a voluntary poverty and a forced one are treated

with the like contempt; whoever shews any constancy in the performance of his duty, appears ridiculous in this world; whoever does not conform to its gallantries, is looked upon as a man of no politeness; whoever raises himself above his senses, to apply himself to such objects as are most worthy of God and religion, goes by the name of a fanatick.

This world affords pernicious maxims and seducing examples; its morals corrupt the heart, and its errours deceive the mind; its politicks make use of religion no farther than it serves to compass its ends; its hypocrisy dresses the most shameful vices in the habit of virtue; it is full of violences which make us guilty of several crimes, and of flatteries to excuse them, that they may be committed with more facility, and less reluctancy. I find, in the confused chaos of this world, an infinite multitude of men, animated with different passions, swelled with pride, blinded by interest, bewitched with love, transported by hatred, tormented with envy, corrupted by laziness, and softened by pleasures. It it an unfortunate region, where corruption is so general, that to corrupt one's self and others is the mutual employment of most men; it is almost a universal sect of people, who deceive others, or are deceived by them; it is a crowd of restless men, who knock one against another to indulge their pride, to satisfy their ambition, or to promote their interest. What a corruption in men's manners! what a luxury in their clothes! how many tricks in the law! how

many frauds in trade! how many treacheries amongst friends! how many acts of unfaithfulness in marriage! what hypocrisy in devotion! what lukewarmness and indifferency for things relating to salvation! Do not we see the slaves of this world always agitated and running into excesses; mad in their love, furious in their hatred, enraged in their jealousy, so melancholy as to fall into despair, so passionate as to lose their reason, and so sensual as to be as much unconcerned for their souls, as if they had none? Alas! must I love the world, because it flatters me with the hopes of elevation, honour, power, learning and riches? But who is more elevated than God, who is above all creatures? Who has more honour paid him, than God, for whom so many altars have smoked, to whom so many sacrifices of praise are offered up, to whom so many sceptres stoop, whom so many crowned heads obey? Who is more powerful than God, before whom states, kingdoms, and empires are but, as it were, a heap of dust and smoke, which he can scatter and destroy in a moment? Who is more formidable than God, at whose command the thunder roars, the lightning flies about, the thunderbolt falls, the elements struggle, and nature trembles? Who is more learned and more knowing than God, who sees all things in himself, who has an abyss of knowledge in his heart, and riches of eternal wisdom in his bosom; before whom time has no bounds, nature no veil, high things no height, and abysses no depth? Who is

more rich than God, who makes the fields pleasant, flowers beautiful, and trees fruitful; who bestows gold and silver upon mines, pearls upon rakers, diamonds upon rocks, and fecundity upon whole nature? Lastly, who is more worthy of our eternal love than God, in whom we see whatever is beautiful, in whom we love whatever is good, in whom we enjoy whatever is great, in whom we taste whatever is sweet, in whom we see original truth, in whom we love original beauty, in whom we enjoy the supreme good, and taste the supreme pleasure; in whom we find good without evil, pleasure without pain, plenty without poverty, life without the fear of death, and a felicity which nothing can alter or destroy? I hope to be admitted into the bosom of that great God, when I leave this world; and therefore I am not at all uneasy at the thoughts of death.

13. The less I shall enjoy this unhappy world, the fewer obstacles I shall be obliged to overcome, in order to enjoy the felicity of another world; in effect, we are willing to save ourselves; but this world would deprive us of our salvation. We are willing to have a clear and distinct knowledge of our duties, and of all the truths that are so essential to our salvation; but this world uses all sorts of artifices to bring us into error. We acknowledge that we shall be undone, if we are fond of sensual pleasures; but this world offers them continually to us, in order to corrupt us. God requires of us, that we should love him above all things; but the world requires of us that we

should love creatures above him. God commands us to love our neighbours so as to forgive their injuries; but the world calls us cowards, if we do not revenge ourselves. God requires of us so steady a faith, that we may be ready to die for it at any time; but the world does all it can to take away from us the sense of religion, that we may be so weak, as to be cast down and overcome by the least human frailties. God assures us that they who suffer, who weep, who are in adversity, shall be saved; but the world excites us to place our happiness in prosperity. It happens sometimes that a man has lived well, because he did not live long; for it is a very difficult thing to be a long time in the midst of dangers, without being overcome by them.

14. Whilst I am in this world, I think more upon the good things I hope for, than upon those which I am to leave; the former are real, and will last forever; but the latter are false, and will certainly steal away from me, if I do not steal away from them. Alas! what signifies it whether I be here, or somewhere else, provided I be well?

15. Why should I be afraid of death, seeing it is in my power to make it a most happy thing for me? I ought to fear it only according as I live an ill life. A good life depends upon me; but a long life is not at all in my power; for it is impossible for me to add one moment to my last hour. I shall make my death happy, if I live a good life; he that will be worthy of the favours of death must make a good use of the favours of life

16. I will not therefore be so much afraid of death, but only learn how to die well. I am highly concerned to know how to do a thing well which I shall never do but once, the event whereof is doubtful, the consequences whereof may prove dismal, and its faults irreparable. If I desire to die happily, I must mortify my vices. All my philosophy, my learning, and my prudence, consist in preparing myself for death. One of the most useful advices I can give myself is to think often of my last hour, and to regulate my whole life upon its last moment; that I may leave, out of a sense of religion, what I must leave out of necessity; and that I may provide, during the little time I am to be in this world, for what I am to be for ever in the next. A happy death will crown my whole life. I shall then very willingly say to hope and fortune,

Inveni portum; spes & fortuna, valete:
Nil mihi vobiscum, ludite nunc alios.

FINIS.

3 J.B.